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ITALY AND THE RISE OF A NEW
SCHOOL OF CRITICISM IN
THE 18TH CENTURY.

THE DEPARTMENT OF ITALIAN STUDIES

The University of Glasgow

Italy and the Rise of a New School of Criticism in the 18th Century

*(With special reference to the Work of
Pietro Calepio)*

BY

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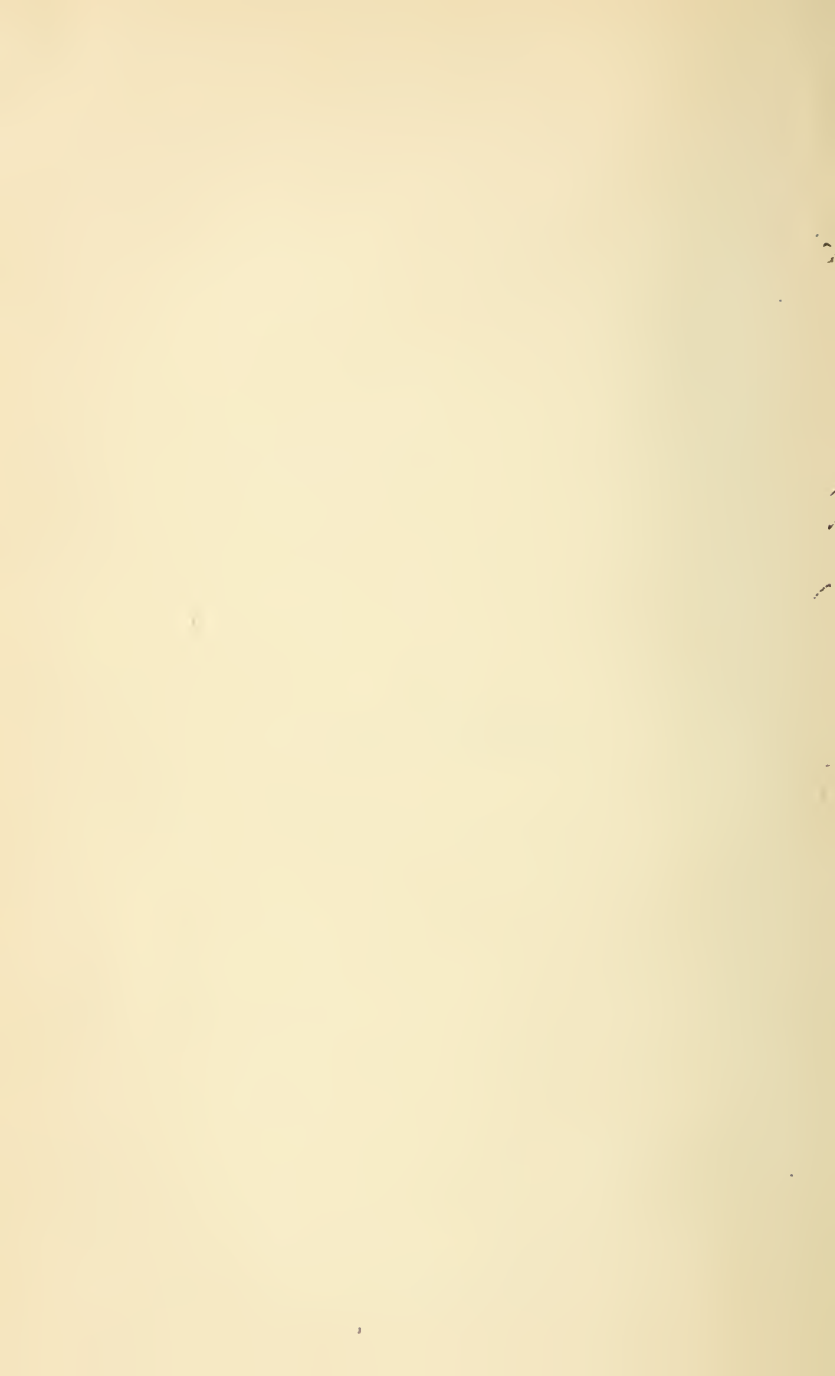
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To

MY FRIEND R. T. C



PREFATORY NOTE.

THE following essay belongs to and supplements a larger work on Italian Literary Criticism in the 17th and 18th centuries which will be published later when the researches into that criticism are finished. Material for this research, conducted under the direction and with the assistance of the Carnegie Trust, was collected in the academic year, 1919-20, in several libraries in Italy, notably the Biblioteca Nazionale and the University Library of Naples, the Biblioteca Civica of Bergamo, the Biblioteche Marucelbana, Laurenzeana and Magleabecchiana of Florence, and the Biblioteca Vittorio Emanuele of Rome; some detail was also culled from the British Museum. Apart from those libraries I enjoyed the privilege of consulting the private collection of Benedetto Croce, and may state that the general principles and methods illustrated in the investigation owe largely their origin to his suggestion and encouragement. With Croce, whose entire work has been directed to the examination and evaluation of the principles of criticism, mention must be made of Professors Torraca, G. Brognoligo—whose work on Antonio Conti is justly esteemed as practically the final study on that writer—Giovanni Gentile, and

Cesare de 'Lollis: with those gentlemen I discussed plans and details, and my hope is now that their suggestion may have borne fruit. The subject of this essay remains quite unknown in this country, and in Italy only the dramatic side has been treated in detail, notably by Galletti and Bartana: consequently the possibilities of wrong perspective are numerous. No one, however, can deny the fascination of the first forty years of the Settecento, a period of evolution, of germination when the internationalisation of literature becomes a predominant factor in literary criticism, when the main movements in European thought are adapted to new principles in literary criticism, the creation and development of a modern esthetic. In this modernisation of criticism no writer has such interest and importance as Pietro Calepio; through him the criticism of Italy grades into that of Germany through the Swiss and Lessing, while in his "Paragone," and the letter to Maffei given here, a new conception of art and especially dramatic art is expressed.

The introduction on the whole movement in 18th century criticism has formed a paper read before the Historical and Philological Section of the Royal Philosophical Society of Glasgow in November, 1920.

HUGH QUIGLEY.

THE DEPARTMENT OF ITALIAN STUDIES,
THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.

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I.

LITERARY CRITICISM IN ITALY AT THE END
OF THE 17th AND BEGINNING OF THE
18th CENTURIES.

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW
CRITICISM OF POETRY.

I.

IN the beginning of the 18th century in Italy a new movement becomes apparent in criticism, not a consummation or even a decided enunciation of new principles but a gradual appearance. Croce in his "New Essays in Esthetic" identifies that appearance with the origins of modern esthetic as applied to literary theory and criticism: but one cannot say that even then, in the 18th century, was a purely esthetic ideal ever possible or even conceivable and still less in the romantic period when emotionalism in art weakened all conception of beauty by placing it, a misty presence, in a vague unknown—rapture of senses but no vibrant knowledge of art as we now consider it. Consequently when the term—a new school of criticism—is used, it is only in a progressive and limited sense at the same time, progressive inasmuch as the ideals uttered by that school never reached finality and limited inasmuch as the theory of poetry and drama was alone developed. The question broadens out to the whole tone and purpose of esthetic criticism as opposed to personal, judicial, interpretative or again to the historical, hedonistic, ethical—can one say that the Settecento ever envisaged such a criticism or had ever an inkling of a philosophy of art, an intrinsic conception of beauty? Does esthetic even

now fit in with the true function of criticism? When one considers those questions it becomes evident at once that literary criticism in the 18th century, while it strove to bring the work of art into direct contact with the mind or spirit and through the spirit with life, did not establish any life doctrine which would render life values consonant with spiritual and again with art itself. What it effected however was a clearing away of old prejudices, old traditions, extrinsic criteria, a levelling up of the art of criticism into true criticism, a unification and intensification of literary theory as applied by the spirit to actual literary creation. Without this groundwork, the romantic and the modern criticism would have been largely in the air and not erected on solid foundations: the Renaissance criticism modified the Alexandrian, the Settecentescan modified the Renaissance; the Romantic, the Settecentescan; and now we strive to distil all four into a single indivisible, final philosophy of art. The element of continuity remains the only constant in the history of the human spirit: the current of innovation set in with the very first production of art: the earliest epic risen from the dim myths of barbarism contained a new element which differentiated it from the instinctive utterance of mythical belief and now that new characteristic lives on, renewed always in the living work of art. How could it be otherwise? How could any production of the human spirit be exactly the same as any other? With this change in literature the attitude to and interpretation of literature must change and thus we find not in the 17th or 18th centuries the origin of esthetic criticism but in every period of poetical inspiration some trace of esthetic as we understand it now. Croce in his essay "On the History of Esthetic" describes this recurrence of philosophic and esthetic principles in literature—*Traces of other thoughts of a more genuine philosophic character become visible: as the Platonic scepticism on the value of poetry, which had*

Croce

in itself the necessity for investigation into the work of fancy and its relations with logical perception; and in the same philosopher, the balancing of myth and logos, of tales and reasonings, of images, and concepts with the assignation of poetry to myth and not to logos; the most profound and most clearly defined thoughts of Aristotle on poetry as being different from history because it is concerned with the universal or ideal, on the difference between the poetry of soul and mere metrical form, on the cathartic power of certain artistic representations, on the correlation of dialectic and rhetoric, of propositions void of logical meaning and yet significant and of importance to the rhetorical consideration, and, lastly, the effort made by Plotinus to fuse the beauty of outer things into inner and spiritual beauty and to link together the conception of beauty and of art." Philosophy entered into art during the classical period and gave art itself a profound inner consistency not attainable by mere perfection of form. But the Renaissance criticism which relied on the Alexandrian and not least on interpretation of Aristotle, no longer tried to penetrate into art but rather to classify it and bring every production into line with preconceived theory. The Renaissance critics and among them may be mentioned Minturno, Muzio, Castelvetro, Vettori, Salviati, Piccolomini, Mazzoni, Tasso, employed interpretation and examination of classical works to define or establish the limits within which the work of art should be restrained. In content, truth and morality and imitation, measured correctness of tone, the golden mean were to be observed while in actual artistic construction harmony remained the chief desideratum: thus the unwearied examination of the difference between poetry and history, the comparison between poetry and painting "ut pictura poesis" blinded their eyes to the true nature of poetry and poetical inspiration. In actual expression (which was invariably

treated as an entity apart) every change in style became adopted as a standard for different literary types; the ornate, grandiose, pathetic, descriptive, tragic, comic. Attic, Asiatic, had each a corresponding type to which it was absolutely confined; in drama the differentiation between tragedy, comedy, pastoral and their lack of relation with epic and lyric formed matter for innumerable theses which were successful eventually in isolating each one of those varieties. It was absolutely extrinsic, a criticism of form and only occasionally of content: the only verdict to be passed on such a criticism is that of de Sanctis "I do not adopt the word form—in the pedantic sense in which it has been understood up to the end of last century. That which draws attention first is the more superficial part, words, sentences; criticism takes hold of these things at once and has called them "form"; and, saying that in them consists the excellence of poetry it has established a false criterion which has had sad effects on even great geniuses." The nature of poetry was passed over in silence; the work of creation and those faculties of the spirit which make creation possible were never investigated. Art had no relation with life, art itself had no relation with even philosophy but signified elaborate artifice, the massing together of content into specified literary types; no questions disturbed them concerning the creative spirit and those ideals which could alone be of the spirit, beauty and emotion, life itself. In one only perhaps is the tradition, or rather example of Plotinus continued—Bracastoro—while in a few others, Aretino for example, we find mention of a special poetical faculty, or emotion, "furore" or lyric enthusiasm. Spontaneity, intuition, imagination, lyric emotion, dramatic passion, spiritual evaluation of life in expression found no disciples and art itself tended more and more to become embroidery, cold artificial abstraction.

The Settecento strove to sweep away this extrinsic evaluation or at least to modify it to conform to a new ideal in poetry. It could not destroy that immense fabric but it could deliberately ignore it or use it for purposes of illustration. Thus we see continual quotation from Renaissance critics but not quotation made in a due spirit of reverence but as a basis on which to erect an original criterion. The Renaissance neglected spirit and glorified form, reduced poetry to the conditions of painting and painting to the exact imitation of nature—while the Settecento tried to define the reality of spirit, bring every possible part of life and expression into direct psychological perception and this perception into a spiritual unity variously known as reason, intellect and even fancy. The explanation of the being of poetry would be largely explanation of the function of our creative faculties. But this function would never of itself lead to a work of art—what criterion would be necessary? The names adopted by the Renaissance were adopted again but in a totally different sense; wonder, novelty, pleasure, fancy, beauty, imitation were given as ideals or propelling forces but those terms became so closely knit together that it was impossible to draw a line of demarcation between any of them since they tended to coincide in a broad definition of the creative spirit. Thus style and its component parts, images, words, thoughts could be no longer apart from inspiration and became identified with the creative faculties, images of fancy or of intellect, *et.* The difference between the faculties corresponded to the difference between the images, words, thoughts. The examination of fancy and poetical imagination, of the beautiful and wonderful, of tragic catharsis, of truth and consonance with nature was practically final in the work of the early Settecento. But it must be noticed that if the Renaissance erred on the side of form, the Settecento erred on the side of spirit and paid too little

attention to form as such. Psychology entered definitely into criticism along with philosophy but the actual artistic expression never found a satisfactory interpreter.

For the first time also in Italian criticism, the influence of foreign models, foreign modes of thought, foreign criteria is of highest value to Italian critics not so much as examples to be followed but as impulses, impellent forces. This influence can be noticed most clearly in the later ideas of beauty and the existence of the beautiful. Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Boethius, Clement of Alexandria, Plotinus, St. Augustine and in the Renaissance, Fracastoro, Tasso, Nesi had all contributed something to the study of the beautiful but in the letter to Ceratti of Antonio Conti, the most considerable evaluation of the beautiful in the early Settecento, a new school of philosophic writers is to be remarked, the English, and among them Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, while Crousaz, a Swiss, also enters into discussion. But in precisely that treatise the peculiar originality of the century makes itself very evident: Conti's theory owes little or nothing to either Shaftesbury or Hutcheson while doubt indeed remains as to the originality of Shaftesbury's own ideas on plastic beauty when we consider that aspect had already been studied in Italy by Leonardo da Vinci and Leon Alberti. It is difficult to accredit anything to Hutcheson since his theory of beauty as Uniformity amidst Variety and its application to man, to the world, to the sciences, the arts, the virtues, religion resembles closely that of Crousaz and had become practically a common-place in almost every theory of the beautiful set forth by those other writers. In Conti we stand on a higher level. Hutcheson creates an entirely extrinsic theory, so extrinsic indeed that he imagines a new sense in man, a sense of beauty—"Beauty is either Original beauty or Comparative; or Absolute or Relative; only let it be noted that by Absolute

or Original beauty, is not understood, any quality supposed to be in the object, that should of itself be beautiful, without relation to any Mind which perceives it: For Beauty like other names of sensible Ideas, properly denotes the perception of some Mind . . . By Absolute Beauty we understand only that Beauty which we perceive in Objects without comparison to anything external, of which the Object is supposed an Imitation or Picture. Comparative or Relative Beauty is that which we perceive in Objects, commonly considered as Imitations or Resemblances of something else." There is no real effort to form a philosophy of the beautiful: Hutcheson merely attaches labels to everything he encounters in nature and man. Toaldo paraphrasing Conti in the "Dissertation on the Ragione Poetica of Gravina" shows further the new conception of poetry and beauty held by Conti—"The Knight Temple calls poetry a compound of painting, eloquence and music. Before him Dante considered poetry as a mixture of rhetoric and music, since eloquence includes painting which is therefore not necessary to add; but the universal and wonderful, two essential things in poetry, are omitted. Addison reduces the characteristics of poetry to the great, to the new, the beautiful. But are not all those things included in variety reduced to unity, in beauty? besides the beautiful, the great, the new, are they not contained in the wonderful? the new is certainly only a condition. What good would be the great, the new, the beautiful without the impassioned?" A distinctly modern note is struck in this affirmation while the idea of beauty as being a pleasure of the mind in its ultimate perception and not of the senses and in its highest of a sublime order belongs to esthetic in a modern application. The thought to be deduced from this influence of foreign writers is that the entire movement towards a more intrinsic criticism was not specifically

Italian but European; in Italy however it received more detached and consequently more definite expression and, when we consider that Sforza Pallavicino in 1644 examined the function of fancy in poetical creation, its origin might well be in Italy itself. The beautiful becomes then an integral part of the spirit itself, a general union of all those elements in poetry which produce delight in the spirit and through that delight ennoble the conception of poetry. Montani, the single critic of genius in the early Settecento, cannot conceive beauty as outside of expression, outside of life—"I say then that beauty in itself alone is a flower, a delightful pleasing thing but ultimately stupid and dead": there is no place in literary appreciation for super-imposed ideals. Muratori in his "*Perfetta Poesia*" defines the beautiful in greater and more philosophic detail than either Hutcheson or Conti. Adopting the criterion of the true and good Muratori seeks out the beautiful in nature and especially the speculative sciences. "Among the many varieties of beauty, of which nature is full, some are material, others immaterial. The immaterial although their effect is often borne by the senses to the intellect, do not belong to the senses but are really enjoyed by intellect alone—as the beauty of God, of knowledge; these can be divided again into two species. Some are based chiefly on the true, others on the good; the beauty of moral virtues has its foundation on the good, and this good, clothed in beauty and learned by intellect, goes on to delight and enrapture the will of man. On the contrary the beauty of the speculative sciences and nobler arts is really and directly based on the true and this truth if beautiful and learned by intellect, delights it softly and charms it." Then Muratori defines the relative values of beauty as beauty and truth as truth. "If truth is lacking to the ornaments of such qualities and such pleasing splendour that

attractive and natural power to delight the intellect does not arise. It is a matter of little importance for us to know whether this beauty can be either extrinsic or intrinsic to truth and whether will, well governed by reason or at liberty, should join with intellect and make truth pleasing or displeasing. All sciences directly or indirectly, seek some truth: truth is persuaded by eloquence; described by history as it occurred; by poetry as it could or should actually happen: pleasure is produced by poetical beauty based on truth. The peculiar truth of poetry, adorned by beauty, delights intellect and the good, which must be married to this truth, edifies the will. And since the true cannot please us without being beautiful, poetry is obliged to use and describe that truth which is beautiful." André in his "*Traité du beau*," forty years later, with his division of the beautiful into "*beau absolu, beau naturel, beau artificiel*" corresponding to "*idées innées, idées adventives, idées factices*" only applies further this intellectual and spiritual conception of beauty.

Of greater importance than this examination of the beautiful, is the desire to explain the origins of poetry in more natural terms than those employed by the adherents of the Aristotelian theory of the logical nature and development of poetry, the Renaissance critics and especially Scaliger. In Francesco Montani di Pesaro, in Gravina, Muratori and above all in Vico a new attitude is to be discerned. In Montani and Vico two different points of view ultimately coincide, since, for both, the origin of poetry is simultaneous and indivisible from the origin of speech. But Montani has no inkling of the epoch-making discovery of Vico that poetry was inherent in man and expressed the first emotions of man in the bosom of nature and beginning of time. Montani in his, "*Lettera toccante le Considerazioni sopra la maniera di ben pensare scritta di un accademico . . . al signor conte di . . .*"

L'Anno 1705," builds up a theory of language which is based on the idea that language was most effective when first used. Speech was fully developed at the beginning owing to God infusing speech into man—"the first men had the use of language by infusion: hence it cannot be doubted that speech belongs to those numerous Daughters of the Divine mind, which deteriorate with use." "There are many words expressing almost every variety of things, but most often the emotions of the soul or the operation of intellect and spirit, which have been in use from those early times, which, varied only a little by inflection, according to the gradual development of dialect, are practically the same in all languages." Montani verges on the Vichian idea of original language being a reflection or utterance of the senses but does not divide this sensual reflection from the power of thought, uniting poetry and poetic reflection or wisdom in the original conception. Speech was the only way to "explain the inner essence of the thing in mind." "Adam named all things with their proper name; the only explanation of this is that he named them in such a way as to bear to the intelligence by means of the hearing the most perfect image of their nature." This point of view, the divine origin and transmission of language, conflicts with that of Vico, the natural origin and evolutionary character. From mute signs or action to the use of bodies or various phenomena of nature to express ideas, to the development of hieroglyphics and animal-painting, Vico traces the origin of speech. Nature impressed certain emotions on man, swayed his senses in a peculiar fashion and ultimately inspired him to utter or give expression, vocal or otherwise, to those sensual impressions. The primitive man strove to fulfil an artistic craving in himself; he saw the animals and the living inhabitants of the outer world and tried, even indistinctly to imitate them in crude drawings: this

imitation was on one side a first exercise of memory and a first poem. The faculties which produced it had no connection with intellect or the employment of reason; they belonged to imagination as stirred to action by intuition, an intuition which arose directly from sensual perception and sensual transmission. Primitive man gave body to his ideas, clothed his thoughts in images, or rather won approach to thought through images since nature had no power in herself to inspire ideas and by combination of images created ideas or synthetic groups of images. The world provided pictures of a definite emotional significance to him and by combining those pictures, he was able to combine emotion and finally to combine those emotions again into a single emotion. The ultimate process would therefore become possible when he could imagine those pictures without employing the senses and imagine emotion without sensual emotion, when he could know why and in what circumstances those impressions or emotions arose. But Vico, while asserting the spontaneous and imaginative origin of language and suppressing the dualism between poetry and language, does not describe how this intuitive poetry merged at last into conscious poetry and how sense gradually changed into a knowledge of art as apart from material function in life. Art originally coincided in life and had properly no existence either as a term or as fact; how then did man conceive a separate notion of art, and what motives lay behind the division and separate development of poetry in lyric, epic, drama or why should differentiation be made between them or why again should poetry, music, sculpture, painting not be explained in one term, art, and not in separate terms? There is confusion between the philosophical or thought concept of the poetical form of mind and the empirical or historical concept of the barbaric form of civilization. Was it necessary to consider barbaric forms as an adjunct to poetry?

Was primitive man most poetical because most primitive? Civilization is explained by history but poetry cannot be explained by history but by knowledge of the human spirit. The science of history is not identical with the science of the human spirit: it is possible to leave aside all empiric data and examine only the spirit without having recourse to terminology. Thus while Vico identifies the poetical utterance of a period with the civilization of the same period—Homer, a barbarous poet in a barbarous age—he does not bring individual spirit into identity with racial or describe why that poetry should necessarily be described in the same terms, or explained only through reference to an age. Similarly he differentiates between myth and poetry when, even in his own definition of the origin of poetry, the origin of mythology is implied: Vico's theory of the myth, in contrast to the medieval definition as allegory of philosophical truths, or the doctrine of myth as the creation of particular nations, the Egyptian or the Hebrew, or of individual philosophers and poets, is only a development of poetry into the history of actual persons and events, adorned by the fancy which made heroes into gods. Emotion transmitted by images was sufficient also to transform living beings into images in the fancy and the fancy or emotion glorified those images until glorification extended to the actual being. Mythology signified development of image not from reality to perception and expression but from perception to reality. Reality inspired image and image in turn coloured reality. Mythology became thus a super-imaginative of poetry or rather became imagined poetry.

Such a non-intellectual theory accorded little with the intellectualistic movement in the Settecento but in Gravina and especially Conti, as we shall see later, some approximation to the Vichian theory becomes evident without however any influence being visible. The intel-

lectual theory of the origin of poetry dominates absolutely and it is only by chance that Conti does give an outline of a natural theory: no writer of the early Settecento, with the exception of Montani, ever dreamt of a natural origin or development from images and the prevailing view of myths was that of allegory adopted to inculcate some moral truth. The Greek epics instilled love of the republic and manly virtues and Homer's epic signified nothing more nor less than morality, didactics represented under allegory. Similarly while the critics of the early Settecento were occupied with a new theory, intellectual, of the origin of poetry, they devoted most of their energy to examination of sacred poetry as being the first real poetry in existence: the dispute which raged round Biagio Garofalo's "*Considerazioni intorno alla poesia degli Ebrei e de' Greci*" show the interest in which this subject was viewed. This examination however, pedantic and fragmentary as it was, showed undoubtedly that the early Settecento criticism aimed at reconstruction and it must now be necessary to describe the various forms that work of critical reconstruction adopted.

Italian literary criticism in the eighteenth century may be divided in three tendencies which, although they fuse together at the end in the Romantic criticism of Baretti, Cesarotti, Algarotti, are sharply distinguished in tone and general content. Of those three periods the first has the double merit of heralding a modern development in criticism, slow germination of new theories in the Seicento until they burst into growth—and of containing the most considerable body of literary criticism in Europe. Discernible all through the Seicento a current of innovation passes—through Galileo, Boccacini, Tassoni, Ottonelli, Lancillotti, Pellegrini, Tesauro—and finds a first definite utterance in Sforza Pallavicino. Such a current verges on esthetic when Tassoni thrusts aside the authority of the ancients and examines the poetry of

Petrarca, when Pallavicino examines the origin and function of first impressions, fancy, *ingegno*, intellect, insists on more literal interpretation of Aristotle in tragedy and more natural standards in literary technique, abolishes the ethical function of poetry and, in his ideal of perfect consonance between matter and expression, of beauty as a direct means of pleasure and of expression again as an instrument in the hands of the artist by which he can transform nature into beauty, he utters a literary criterion not dissimilar from that adopted by the French Parnassiens of the 19th century. The effort of all true critics in the Seicento was directed against the extravagance and licence of the Marinistic school, against conceits, verbal arabesque and subtleties, displays of wit, that peculiar blight of the poetry of the Seicento diagnosed by Benedetto Croce as "*concettismo ed ingegnosità*." Towards the end of the century this effort was successful and the creation of the *Aradia* by Crescimbeni, Leonio, Gravina gave realisation to this desire for renovation. Two factors, however, of greater moment than this literary academy, intervened to encourage enquiry into the faculties which govern literary expression and gave life to art: the hostile criticism of Italian classics by the French, both "*anciens*" and "*modernes*" and the penetration of the Cartesian philosophy into Italy. Both movements,—the national reaction to those French attacks and the application of Cartesianism to literary criticism—coincided later and produced a third tendency when criticism was applied chiefly to drama by Muratori, Gravina, Martelli, Conti, Maffei, Gerino Cori, Baraffaldi and Zanetti and undoubtedly prepared the way for Gozzi, Metastasio and Alfieri.

A division of material as well as a division into tendencies may be noted: in the early years of the Settecento, notably in Montani, Muratori, Gravina, Conti,

the theory of poetry is fully developed and attains a power of esthetic knowledge not surpassed by any later work of the century and curiously modern in tone; later, an equally thorough investigation into the function of tragedy and French drama in Caloprese, Gravina, Martelli, Conti, Maffei, while Pietro Calepio brings to light principles in dramatic criticism and especially the Aristotelian catharsis not superseded by the German school of dramaturgists, Lessing, Schiller, Schlegel.

In France, where the literary principles formulated by the Italian critics of the Renaissance had found a peculiarly favourable reception and become aggravated and distorted into a new classical tradition through the work of Corneille, Racine, Boileau, the rise of a new school and the battle between Anciens et Modernes led to adoption of this new tradition and depreciation of the old. It was employed by Baillet, Fontenelle, Marmontel, Bouhours, Rapin to glorify French literature above all the other literatures of Europe, especially Italian and that cool attack against Tasso and the later Renaissance lyric poets begun by Boileau was continued later by those writers. The standards of criticism are so miserable that one would discern rather merit in those writers condemned than fault—the imposition of the most purist restrictions in language, the most repellent Port Royal religiosity in the evaluation of poetry and a careful disregard of consistency in condemnation. Dante, Petrarch, Bembo, Tansillo, Ariosto, Tasso, Sannazaro, are numbered among the victims. This attack provoked reply from Italy in the shape of the Orsi compilation “*Considerazioni del Marchese G.G. Orsi sopra la maniera del ben pensare già scritta dal P. Domenico Bouhours*” when Orsi tears to pieces a book written by a French critic, Bouhours, of quite considerable attainments and of a modern turn of mind according to Doncieux (“*Un Jesuite homme de lettres au XVIIe siècle*”) namely “*La*

Manière de bien penser dans les ouvrages de l'esprit." In this collection of extracts, Bouhours attacks in detail the leading Italian poets and especially Tasso. Orsi was helped in his reply by the leading "letterati" of Italy, Bernardoni, Muratori, Salvini, Bedori, Torti, Sacco, Apostolo Zeno, Eustachio Manfredi, Antonio Gatti and Fontanini. This Orsi confederacy represented the academic school, the older scholastic and even pedantic tendencies and its reply provoked in turn from Italy itself an attack from an exponent of modernity in criticism, Francesco Montani di Pesaro. Montani was countered by Bottazzoni, Garafalo, Capassi, Baraffaldi, Allaleona, all of reactionary views. There is no doubt whatever that this short essay of the Pesarian letterato "*Lettera toccante le Considerazioni sopra la maniera ecc . . . scritta di un accademico . . . al signor conte di . . . L'anno 1705*" belongs to that small group of work of genius written during the Settecento and the brilliance and swiftness of thought uttered in singularly vivid style makes it absolutely modern in tone and application.

The Orsi reply did not go beyond the most academic formalities, refutation on philological and as a consequence pedantic grounds; Montani did not develop sufficiently his theories; a final and most important work arose from the attack, combining the merits of both—Muratori's "*Perfetta Poesia*." Landau gives it its real position in the history of criticism—"Italian literature at the beginning of the 18th Century, before other modern cultured peoples, could show extensive and fundamental works on the theory and criticism of literature. Long before Burke and Home, before Lessing and Mendelssohn, before Batteux and Diderot, even before Addison, Shaftsbury, Dubos and Baumgarten, the first great work on poetics appeared in Italy, Muratori's '*Perfetta Poesia*.' " Muratori works back on those esthetic outlines already touched on by Pallavicino, defines further the use

and reality of fancy ; for the first time examines the nature of created fancy, poetical inspiration as dependant on fancy, the relations of *ingegno*, intellect, good taste ; investigates truth in poetry, especially spiritual truth, the nature of the beautiful, imitation and fidelity to nature, the new, the delightful, the wonderful ; distinguishes between poetry and history, tragedy, epic, comedy and lyric and ends with drawing up a plan for a literary republic. Some sections are amazingly modern in tone, especially his theory of the origin of poetry—"In every period, every place where good poets and fortunate geniuses have flourished according to the transmigration of knowledge, poetry has always been guided by the same principles of the beautiful. The true acted as basis for tales, actions, habits, feelings, emotions and the entire work of poetry. To express well the emotions, thoughts and abstract truths, the most ancient and strange poets used the medium of vivid figures, similes, parables, metaphors, fanciful and ingenious images. They studied nature and expressed the true in apt, living striking words or in emotional, majestic and tender, simple, elaborate and marvellous forms according to the diversity of subject. The purest, holiest and most ancient poetry has been undoubtedly that of the Hebrews . . . The basis of this Sacred poetry is not different from that of the Greeks, Latins, Italians and French. The beautiful has always been beautiful and such will remain in all places and at all times, because nature has been one and will always be one, the nature which good poets describe. The mere cultivation, whether more or less, of studies brings it to pass that, more in one country, less in another, poetical geniuses are more or less fortunate in composing poems since all men contain in themselves the same germs of beauty." The romantics added nothing to this glorification of the inner power, the close fidelity to nature. Muratori condemns the use of love-intrigues in the

French drama and advocates the creation of a national drama to make good his work against the French; with this, mention must be made of his advocacy of modern literature against the old, the desire to cut adrift from the traditional classical domination. Those ideas or tendencies, first put forward by Muratori, are developed all through the Settecento, and find a strong support in Calpio.

A romantic element is visible in Muratori but he cannot conceive a doctrine of poetical inspiration at all comparable to that of Francesco Montani—"We have need of great things in our heads, of great arsenals of perception, of knowledge, of gleams. It must be an immersion, steeping, a delirium of fancy kept on through the years and the years melting away to a deep, unceasing whirlpool of infinite ideal species; then rising from it all dripping, glutted, sprinkled so to speak, and flooded, the arts have emotions perfect and unknown to the crowd, and although there are many in number and diverse, yet so harmonised in themselves that every mind reached by such profusion is bathed in an abyss of light. There remains no more hope of distinguishing them by reason than the little genii of a poor streamlet can be distinguished among the Nereids and Tritons of the sea"—a beautiful passage where the intuitive nature of inspiration is wonderfully described. Montani combats also the authority of the ancients—"Live in the old, think and write in the modern fashion: every age is enslaved and afflicted by this disease of affecting too much the imitation of the ancients."

With Muratori we already touch on the Cartesian influence since in his "*Treatise on Fancy*" Cartesianism and English empiricism join together: to this influence can be traced the steady change of thought into the rationalism of the Settecento and the scientific spirit of enquiry and synthesis, a new theory of inspiration, of ultimate values in literature and the effort to fuse extrinsic

qualities, to bring even technique, even the most elaborately superficial artifice into the intense, into the action and need of spirit itself. Borinski in a paragraph of his "Poetik der Renaissance" touches on this movement—"The attacks of the modern against the ancients led the philological sciences in their defence to closer examination of the time, race and individuality of the poet. Of special note however was the real support gained by poetics from the development of philosophy—the esthetic. The divine science has, since its most recent impulse in Descartes, considered with greater disdain her earlier sister, the divine art. As creator of empty phantasms without reality she appeared of little moment to her, as exciter of emotions even dangerous. Her indeterminate, variable character was most clearly to be deduced from her production, abandoned carelessly to the uncertain judgment of human opinion. The dispute about taste appears madness beside the sure, unassailable decision of truth. The possibility of rescuing a real criterion in taste was interpreted by her protagonists, the writers on poetic, as a deliberate process, as logical reflection. They pushed away those who, consistent with the nature of "I don't know what," had the daring to speak unflinchingly of direct discrimination of sense. When they could hold out no longer against these attacks, they allowed reflection to follow, confirm or correct the sensual impression." The Cartesian philosophy, by insisting on direct reference to perception as a means of knowing reality, made impossible the imposition of traditional and extrinsic standards when applied to literary thought, forced critics back on impressions of reality as impressed on the senses, and by the senses on the cognitive faculties, and rendered obligatory a fuller understanding of the mind itself. Only through spirit could reality be known and the knowledge of reality would be the knowledge of those faculties of the spirit which registered the impression

of reality. Such an examination of the mind could be traced back to Campanella and Giordano Bruno and the Cartesian philosophy was introduced into the Italian Universities by Gregorio Caloprese, a Southern professor. Croce in his "*Nuovi Saggi di estetica*" (in *Sulla storia dell' estetica*) brings such a change into criticism by making it coincide with esthetic—"Turning to esthetic, the problem which the new science had to resolve was that of the function which poetry, art or fancy exercises in the life of the mind and hence the relation of fancy with logical cognition and with moral and active life. 'Make an inventory of the human mind' was the new '*mot d'ordre*' in speculation and the problem of esthetic formed part of the desired inventory and became fused in it. It was impossible to sound to the bottom the qualities of poetry and the work of fancy without sounding the whole of the mind and it was impossible to construct a philosophy of mind without constructing an esthetic." In criticism the influx of this new philosophy would sweep away all those empiric methods of the Renaissance, render less useful academic and philological discussion or legislation, smother those too rigid divisions of genre in literature which tended to reduce literary composition to mere subservience to rule. The new tendency was to extend the methods of philosophy from the investigation of truth alone to the investigation of creation in the mind, to examine closely and connectedly those faculties which govern literary creation and expression, co-ordinate results and produce a theory which would combine all faculties into unity, the mind or reason. The literary criticism of the Settecento differed entirely from any earlier criticism: the Cartesian philosophy while opening out new worlds to the philosophers, opened out new perspectives to the critic and the development of modern philosophy coincides with the origin and development of esthetic.

Cartesianism in philosophy led to a new form of pedantic criticism in Gravina, who in the "*Ragione Poetica*," instead of constructing a new theory of the mind in literary creation on a basis of pure inner knowledge as apart from traditional, strove to combine the earlier Renaissance ideals with the new doctrine, to fuse empiric generalisations with the direct study of the mind itself; applied the older formulæ of utility, pleasure, truth, probability to the diagnosis of the poetical impulse itself. Muratori had avoided this difficulty by defining and isolating in importance the creative faculties and employing his examination of them in the criticism and elucidation of extrinsic, traditional theories, desirous of bringing it into line with the inner power: the effort failed in some details through lack of investigation and fuller knowledge but the intention, namely, to found a theory of literature on the spirit itself, was entirely consistent and largely successful. Gravina, on the other hand, worked from extrinsic material to the spirit and only at intervals did he ever find illumination. A double weakness must be noted in him—the tendency to adopt too literally the methods of the classical and Renaissance criticism and an equally disastrous tendency to apply the Cartesian principles to poetry and the poetic impulse. The traditional and the scientific are always at variance in him. Hence the mixture of sensualism, the theory of pleasure as shown in his definition of dramatic effect—"From the tragedies and misfortunes shewn we derive pleasure, and rejoice in affliction, because the soul is stimulated by slight titillation without being struck or consternated by the thought of sorrow"—and didactics; the Renaissance, the Seicento and the modern; but it is impossible to invest him with the originality of Muratori and still less with the title of modernity in esthetic. "Since rules precede every work and reason every rule: as every noble edifice is built according to the rules of architecture

and the rules of architecture have for reason geometry, which gives the proper reason to every fine work, that reason, which geometry gives to architecture, the science of poetry gives to the rules of poetics." Poetry is dominated by mathematics, a sufficiently reactionary theory, and the spontaneous element in creation disappears: mathematics can open a way to the life of the spirit. This science has for function the proper definition of the useful, the true, the probable, the pleasurable, so that good will always result: poetics form an integral part of ethics, a narrower moral philosophy. "Poetry is an enchantress but salutary at the same time, a delirium which clears away madness." The intention shows however a certain novelty: other critics stop at the work of poetics, Gravina must find an explanation of poetics itself. In his insistence on the "admirable" or "marvellous" he adds nothing to the thought of Pallavicino and does not betray the same inner knowledge of the being of drama as Caloprese who, in a letter to Niccolo Caracciolo on the invention of the dramatic plot, attributed the work of poetry to the beautiful and marvellous. The supreme reason for the beautiful was beauty itself and could not be attained by adherence to rules: the ideal connection between art and philosophy could not be immutable or a matter for legis'ation. Caloprese thus envisaged an esthetic purpose in drama which Gravina in his book on tragedy never admits, so intent is he on joining knowledge, erudition, poetry and music together in a moral tendency.

Against that however must be noted the amazing "Discorso sopra l'Endimione" where Gravina strikes out some profoundly sane and some entirely modern observations. "Everyone bears in himself the flint to provide the spark but he only awakens the hidden flame who can govern and direct his intellect in a straight line through the intricate labyrinth of confused ideas, placing them in

symmetry and exact location, building with them the mysterious pyramid with which the ancient sages symbolised human science and the nature of things—in such a way that all ideas hang from a single point and are fixed and linked in the tip of a simple and universal idea. Human science is a pure harmony and when it is produced, the mind will go everywhere with sure step, extract the pure from doctrines and arts, and it will be always penetrated by the law of the suitable and harmonious, with which, on meeting particular examples, there is generated in the mind itself the art of that which it proposes to contemplate.” Nature, truth must be followed and the impression of novelty and wonder gives poetical invention such power that “exciting the attention and raising the mind above earthly things, lifts it above itself, so that it frees itself more readily and quickly from those bonds with which physical nature retards our flight towards the contemplation of the pure and eternal.” This theory of the function of poetry does combine Cartesianism with literary criticism into a new power, which we might name esthetic. Emil Reich’s observation—“Gravina sways over to the right belief that poets may be also wise men but their world-philosophy could not be expressed indiscriminately in philosophical and poetical utterances but could only come from the inner dictate, the natural impulse”—while more applicable to Muratori is justified by that “Discourse on the Endymion.”

Gravina does not approach the origin of poetry in the same ideal as Vico who saw in the early world a naturally poetical world but his conception bears a distant resemblance to that of Vico. The first people invented poetry, for their words were nature itself—“Those images and tales, created by the strength of poetical invention either represented by words or delineated in colours or sculptured on marble or expressed by mute gestures and actions always recognise mother and nurse in poetry which tran-

fuses its spirits by various instruments; and, changing instruments, does not change its nature, since even with words as with chiselled marble, as with colours and dumb gestures, thought is clothed in dress to correspond in hidden signification, with the inner spirit and, in physical appearance, with external members." Poetry gave birth to religion in the earliest times, poetry and religion were one and the human need for poetry invented that ancient Greek mythology and in modern times the conception of God.

A more original and more universal mind than either Muratori or Gravina is possessed by Antonio Conti who, in his "Dissertation on the Ragione Poetica" of Gravina expresses an attitude of mind practically modern and he betrays knowledge of the Vichian philosophy when discussing that passage from Gravina translated above—"Vico speaks greatly of those universal and fanciful types and will have it that the ruder Men having composed them not for pleasure or utility but through the necessity to explain their feelings as taught by nature, gave with the poetical language the elements for a Theology, a Physic, a Moral entirely poetical, from which the more learned nations gathered ancient mythology, corrupted with the progress of time by human passions and changed into idolatry." The influence of Vico is also visible in Conti's romantic conception of the origin of Greek poetry as being explained by study of the American savages; the thought expressed reminds one of Herder and the romantic theory of folk-song—"Those who have travelled and conversed some time with the savages of Amercia and other parts of the earth still uncivilized are agreed in stating that the latter, in the manner of children and undisciplined youths, having no other use for the senses, fancy and passions, invest with those faculties all that they see and hear. They believe for example that the Heavens tremble when it is thunder, that the trees groan when they sweat, that

fire loves the tinder when it seizes it : in short they give life and soul to all even as they feel in themselves . . . From the ravings of their dreams they derive the conception of strange monsters and such forms are suggested to them by the always changing forms of the clouds and the shadows cast by the moon in the bushes. The swishing of lightning, the growling of thunder, and the rushing of torrents from the lofty rugged hills, the rains which threaten floods, the fires which reduce forests to ashes, comets, falling stars . . . make them stunned and mute . . . They delight in watching the pictures which the sun makes of trees and flowers in the water and more than aught else they are pleased with the image of their face and all their body when they see them reflected in pools and quiet streams . . . They rejoice greatly in the song of birds in the foliage and in the hollows of the caves . . . I have reduced this to a kind of philosophical theory to show that in the savages was all that constitute the poetical faculties, i.e., vivacity of fancy, swift passions from which enthusiasm comes, delight of imitation and harmony from which are derived the nature and expression of poetry." In Conti we touch on those principles by which we distinguish the romantic period—but only touch, for the vice of incomplete investigation, incomplete intuition, incomplete knowledge gives to his theories a pedantic and purely academic application. In practically every writer of the early Settecento there are gleams of light even in darkness, Cimmerian at times, and collocation of those gleams would suffice to prove that the romantic and even modern literary criticism have roots in that past age and that revival should be replaced by development in literary history.

In the "*Trattato de' fantasmi poetici*" there is a real effort to construct an esthetic based on fancy and the correct definition of poetry, in variance with the "theories of Castelvetro and the Renaissance com-

mentators of Aristotle but still conservative in the retention of the moral element." Thus, while Conti approaches poetry in a scientific spirit and tries to explain its origin and function by direct reference to the fancy, he has little to add to the theory of Muratori, and the influence of the English philosophers, Locke, Clarke, Hutcheson only combines with that of Descartes, Malebranche, Leibniz and Wolfe to produce in him enthusiasm for mathematical explanation without any real intuition of the genius of poetry. Thus he combats Hutcheson's idea of a new sense for the beautiful as being unnecessary since the beautiful is only a relative idea, composed of physical and spiritual elements: "in the corporeal element, beauty may be compared to the ideas of sensible qualities and in the spiritual, to the idea of justice and truth, etc. If we had not the sense of sight, such a thing as black and white would not exist and the beauty which presupposes it would also disappear inasmuch as it appeals to the eye alone and not to the sense of smell, of taste, of touch. If there were no mind, there would be no idea of proportion in the parts and no conception of their adaptation." Beauty then is a matter for sense and mind and its explanation must rest on a psychological basis. In the "Treatise on Poetic Images" or "fantasms" this double influence or rather triple influence of æsthetic pleasure, psychological investigation and ethics invests the conception of poetry with a certain unity and harmony while the actual division of perception in fancy, of poetry with reference to history conforms to a single idea of the spiritual and mental significance of poetical creation. The methods of pure philosophy are applied to fancy itself. Conti, not content with Bacon's principles of imagination in poetry, wishes to define more surely the work of fancy or imagination: the poet should combine in his fancy three types—the "sensific" when the spirit feels no less than if the senses of sight, hearing, etc., were actually

in operation, that is, in dreams, delirium—the “visific” or those visions which belong to hallucination—and a third, the “passionate” when reality is coloured by the emotions as in the fancy of Don Quixote. The poet, “to imitate things and form images should have a kind of sense and vision; and to excite passion in others, should be moved intimately. Then in the heat of his enthusiasm, like to the lover, he gives passion to nature, speaks to the stars, to the trees, to the mountains, just as if they were part of his feelings and answered him.” Conti returns to that theme of poetry developed from the example of the American savages, but in addition to this passionate fancy, a second type must be noted which neutralises the other—judgment, wisdom, good taste, which guides the poet in the use or neglect of rules of art. “If you imagine the work of the sculptor in creating the Laocoon of the Belvedere or that of Vergil in describing in verse the image of Laocoon himself, you will have an idea of this imaginative art which forms and perfects poetical fancy.” Muratori devoted a few pages to poetic fancy, Conti deduces from it the entire essence of poetry but his definition of such a poetic fancy is too scientific, too formal. In this light we must consider Conti’s refutation of that new sense for the beautiful described by Hutcheson as only being acceptable in a poetic and not philosophic sense. “The poet is allowed to create new beings and new powers and if he gives passion and intelligence to things, which do not possess them, to excite greater wonder, who can prevent him from introducing a new sense of beauty in poetry, so much dearer when it appears to the people that the new sense extends our beings and increases our pleasures.”

Then Corti divides poetry into three grades according to subject, with the proviso that those grades are not isolated from each other but may be fused together—(1) the poetry of images which corresponds to the painting

of portraits, historically and scientifically true, (2) the poetry of idols or images which corresponds in figures to the natural, partly true and partly fictitious, (3) the poetry of spectres or ghosts which corresponds to the picturesque conceptions, wholly fictitious. The graduation is then from the true to the fictitious and each element grades also from period to period, develops through the centuries—the probable, the wonderful, the emotional, the characteristic vary in direction and content according to the time and place. “Just as there is a graduation in the wonderful according to the centuries, we must note it also in habit to judge sanely of poets. Thus if Paolo Beni, who had compared Tasso to Vergil and Homer, had reflected on the time in which they wrote, he would not have preferred in habit or description one poet to another, but given to each the praise due to the nature of their times and the examples they had under their eyes.” The Taine theory of milieu is developed by Conti *in extenso*. Again the modern idea of sport as a means of avoiding the infinite, of stilling the inner spirit comes into prominence: “hunting, fencing, dancing, music are common exercises in all times and all countries: it is called killing time, everything which does not compel us to reflect in ourselves.” Emotional graduation must be observed in the painting of passion, touch by touch, feeling by feeling, until the great effect is reached. Brognoligo in his remarkable study on Antonio Conti defines the chief merit of Conti in this connection—“he believed that content should change with the times; and if we cannot salute in him a renovator of art, for no renovation is possible without the discussion of form, we should remember however that the new content introduced into the old moulds can be such as to lead slowly but surely, and without knowledge of it on the part of him who introduces it, to renovation of form.” Conti’s definition of poetry takes indeed little note of form—

"poetry is the science of human and divine things converted into fanciful and harmonic image"—but he never neglects entirely this question of form.

Conti's importance, as we consider it in his "Letter to Madame la Presidente Ferrant" especially, and in his "Treatise on Italian Poetry," the "Letter to Ceratti," lies exactly in his psychological examination, his investigation of content as apart from style and in many ways his direct criticism of Italian and foreign classics anticipates modern criticism, notably his comparison of Dante and Milton, his conception of Homeric poetry, of the epics of Ariosto and Tasso. His letter on poetical invention with special reference to Tasso and Milton written in 1719 to the Presidente Ferrant must be one of the most remarkable productions of the Settecento.

With Conti the Cartesian and purely rationalistic elements in the criticism of poetry come to maturity and gradually develop into a more modern, more romantic theory. The last great critic of that early period is Giulio Cesare Becelli, who with Calepio, may be said to have regulated and concentrated the earlier principles into a single united critical impulse which produced the work of Cesarotti, Zanetti, Baretti, Metastasio and Alfieri. Becelli brought to definite utterance all that scattered critical material antagonistic to the ancients and especially Aristotle which, ever since Francesco Montani has distinguished the work of the Settecento: in Muratori, Gravina, Martello, Conti, Maffei, Fontanini we find that hostile undercurrent but it remained only undercurrent, in Becelli it comes into the clear light of day. Becelli's work "*Della novella poesia*" accomplished what Conti had always desired—a full treatise on modern poetry and we can trace repetitions of and parallels to many of the latter's theories in Becelli, so much so that the title of "Precursor of romanticism" granted by Emilio Bertana

to Becelli could just as well be applied to Conti if such a theory could be deduced from their works. But it is futile to designate Becelli with such a name since every theory or opinion advanced by him can be found in earlier writers of the Settecento : the whole tendency of the period from Pallavicino onwards was against tradition and authority, ancient or Renaissance, against servile imitation in the subject matter and technique of poetry, against the French pseudo-classicism and the too rigorous observance of the unities in drama and towards an individual, direct criticism founded not on extrinsic or traditional criteria but on the discrimination of individual judgment, towards closer obedience to and recognition of nature and simplicity, " *Unmittelbarkeit* " in representation and unity of emotional effect. Those elements are already in Muratori, Martelli, and Conti; Becelli simply expresses them more clearly and definitely under the title of modern or new poetry. With him the period of reconstruction and preparation comes to an end and now the broadening-out of criticism to other countries and especially Britain, the knowledge of the Northern poetry, of Milton and Shakespeare and of the work of Ossian gives a deeper significance to Italian criticism as a whole; in the early Settecento, the criticism of other countries and especially France is absorbed in Italian, a motion inwards from without; in the second period this motion inwards ends and criticism is reflected in actual literary work and at the end of the century Italian criticism begins to influence in turn the criticism of France, Switzerland and Germany. This is merely a broad indication of the great currents which led from the early nationalism and Cartesianism towards a more spontaneous, more Vichian theory of poetry in Cesarotti, Bettinelli, Pagano, Baretti, Gozzi and ultimately graded into the classical-romantic work of Leopardi and Manzoni through the " *Caffe*," " *Conciliatore* " and other journals inspired by Berchet and

Foscolo. Thus, in no sense of the word could the Romantic pedied in Italy be termed revolt or revival but rather a finely graded development of ideas already in germ and only awaiting recognition and enunciation.

In this work of the early Settecento, contemporaneous with and depended from it, a new evaluation of the older classics appears, of Dante, Petrarca, Ariosto, Tasso, and Homer. The Settecentescan appreciation of these writers proves the fundamental soundness of their critical ideas and ideals since our modern views repeat substantially and modify at best only slightly the Settecentescan. In Gravina there is a first clear effort to penetrate to the inner meaning of the "Divina Commedia," beyond that tissue of scholastic symbolism and the most arid didacticism, allegorical morality, weary discussion of historical illusions and religious divisions, disputes concerning drama, epic, structure and impression which distinguished Dantescan criticism during the Renaissance and Seicento. (Few studies have been more profound and more intuitively true than that of Gravina in the "Ragione Poetica"; the old disputes about form are dismissed at once in the phrase—"Dante, while impressing thus all the traits of souls and their passions, adopts the form of all styles, the tragic form in a great subject, the comic and satirical in the mediocre and ridiculous, in praise the lyric and in sorrow the elegiac." The moral and theological nature of the poem is summed up in a peculiarly intense passage—"Then rising to the contemplation of the infinite divine, we unveil the soul from the senses, exclude particular and finite ideas from it since they are only born in our fancy and are the occasion of all the errors and the root of the passions which bring more evil in their train than pleasure. The mind severs connection with those bonds, when, wandering in substance, it dwells in the infinite; and, seeing effects derived from other causes than apparent, it ceases to expect what cannot

happen or what we cannot escape and learns for its own good how much of the divine order of things it is capable of possessing. In this way the wandering and uncertain movement of will, is stopped by the intellect, intent on the divine and infinite ideal." There is here no longer any attempt at moralizing but a desire to penetrate to the innermost parts of the thought which inspired the poem and Gravina makes comparison between Dante and Homer, to establish the comparative excellence of both from this inner esthetic basis. Homer is recognised with Dante as belonging to that divine order of poets or prophets so greatly revered by the Hebrews and early peoples and the Dantescan poem as the Homeric is as "a canvas which swells and stretches round an imagination moved if not by supernatural, at least by extraordinary and almost divine fire." The Vichian conception of Dante remains even more profoundly just: Dante was the culmination of a long period of violent passions and blazing fancy, the expiring barbarism in Italy; his epic contained and brought to beauty the work and aspirations of ten centuries even as Homer in ancient Greece and the same doctrine of poetry, the same science of intuition and lyricism, would explain both. Vico even as Gravina brings Dante into his conception of poetry and the difference in their view of Dante and Homer corresponds to the difference in their theory of poetry. Antonio Conti abandons the analogy of Homer and Dante for that of Dante and Milton. "As Poetry, moral philosophy, revealed theology are the guides in this eclectic journey, he personifies them in Virgil, Cato, Beatrice and gives the most sublime example of poetry and allegorical creation which has ever occurred to a human mind. If Addison praises the "Paradise Lost" of Milton as a poem unsurpassed since it does not yield in beauty to the "Aeneid," in grandeur to the "Iliad," in novelty to the "Metamorphoses" of Ovid, the finest poems left to us

by antiquity—that may be quite true : but Milton has built his poem on stories and traditions known to us while Dante has derived everything from his own idea, creating place, time, action ; and—more wonderful still—when reading Milton, all wonder ceases with reading since all is limited to the knowledge of Scriptural facts which bear in themselves only the connatural allegories ; on the contrary, the more we strive to penetrate to the meaning of the “ Comedy,” the more numerous those meanings become.” This comparison has now even a certain value since Macaulay denies suggestiveness to the “ Comedy ” and credits Milton with greater inventive power. In the same way Ariosto is given precedence over Tasso for wealth and vivacity of fancy, inherent truth of characterisation and fidelity to psychology in delineation. Petrarca, on the other hand, the favoured poet of the Renaissance and the model for all poetical exercises, is justly censured for having diverted and weakened the true poetical impulse imparted to Italian literature by Dante. The object of poetry becomes limited to a narrow abstraction, Platonic love, when it should embrace the infinite and the poet abandons life for unreal amorous speculation. If Petrarca desired limitation of poetry why did he not limit it to higher and more sublime subjects, to life itself ? The genre found perfection in him and became incapable of further expansion with the result that Italian poetry deteriorated and became silent for two centuries. Gravina condemns the aristocratic nature of his poetry, as only for those who understand Platonic love ; to the others it must appear made of subtle rather than true inventions, pompous rather than natural exaggerations. Love is used for pleasure when its true function revolves round the “ use of beauty, deriving from it delight not of the senses but of reason : beauty acts as opportunity and entrance to the soul of the beloved thing.”

The whole desire and tendency of the early Settecento.

remained truth not of material but of mental expression, the constant endeavour to penetrate to the inner motive of the creator and also of reader and combine impressions or mental and emotional impulses. The Settecentescans aimed at unity of art even as unity of perception and even if that aim was never fully realised, the effort constituted in itself the most courageous and most remarkable body of criticism in Europe of that time. The bonds of authority and tradition cast aside, where could they find new perspectives, new criteria, new ideals and if they partially failed in their search, how can we have any other feeling than gratitude for ideal and admiration for achievement?

II.

DRAMATIC CRITICISM AND THE INFLUENCE
OF FRENCH DRAMA.
FROM MURATORI TO CALEPIO.

11.

CONTEMPORANEOUS with this development of esthetic in the criticism of poetry we must note a corresponding development in dramatic theory, and especially in that type of dramatic theory upheld by the French. The reaction against the hostile criticism of Rapin, Mambrun, Bouhours, Fontenelle took two forms entirely different. In the Bouhours-Orsi controversies the criteria were fundamentally pedantic and referred only to academic and philological minutiae without any real comprehension of the nature and function of criticism. When those pedantic refutations were completed the work of Orsi and his confederacy was finished, and the entire movement fused into Cartesianism and nationalism in Muratori. But a second form of greater moment distinguished this reaction; the attention of the Italians was drawn at once to their own lack of literary and notably dramatic material to neutralize the French. They became nationally conscious; and the result of this new feeling of nationality in literature was an urgent need for a national drama. How could this national drama be created, and what models could be used? In Europe one type of tragedy was alone famous, namely, the French, that type from which, in the words of Bertana, "were excluded the

monstrous atrocities of punishments, the frightful fatalities of crime, the absurd interventions of the mythological supernatural; from which messengers and fixed choruses are banished; in which the narrations of former and present facts are limited and fused into dialogue, scenes are grouped in one succession, characters are ennobled and often led to express an ideal of higher virtue and passions in those characters called heroic, while the amorous element predominates in the constitution of the plot and development of the action." The loving element, "elemento amoroso" characterised the work of Corneille, Racine, and a host of imitators, and such an element was not entirely unfamiliar to connoisseurs of Italian drama in the late Cinquecento and Seicento. But the critics of the Settecento approached tragedy in a different mood; they desired a national drama and not an Italian imitation of French motifs and technique; the scientific bent of mind taught by Cartesianism led inevitably to a profounder comprehension of the function of tragedy and a desire to establish once and for all time those philosophical, psychological and technical laws which govern dramatic creation. Dramatic theory became then an integral part of the new esthetic, and contributed just as much as the investigation of the esthetic faculties to the real definition of art and poetical creation. Thus we find practically nowhere in the Settecento a deliberate imitation of the French form but courageous attempts to evolve a practicable form of drama which would be more in consonance with the new intenser appreciation, with the new attitude towards psychological content. The critics of the Settecento did not limit their attention to the French, but considered the classical, especially the Greek, tragedy and those earlier Italian dramas derived from it in Rucellai, Trissino, Pallavicino, and the pastorals of Tasso and Guarino. Consequently all through the century we find a continual study of the classical and

French forms, a continual reference to the authority of Aristotle without, however, servile obedience to the latter's doctrines. Some critics strove to create a new tragedy modelled on the classical as Alessandro Guidi in his "Endymion" and Gravina in his five tragedies, "Papiniano," "Servius Tullius," "Palamedes," "Appius Claudius," and "Andromeda;" others on a combination of both French and classical as Martelli and Maffei; others on the French alone, as Antonio Conti, but in every case the production is purely Italian in tone and in technique.

The revival of the classical influence dates from the creation of the Arcadia, a literary academy similar to those already in existence in the Seicento—the Academy della Crusca, of the "Umoristi," "Intrecciati" and "Infecondi" which owed their origin to the universal desire of restoring literature to its proper place in life. They had all elaborate codes and legislation and all tended to suppress literature by over-cultivation of the extrinsic, superficial, formal, without any attention being devoted to the creative spirit itself; the only valuable proposal for a literary academy was that of Muratori who in his "Disegni della repubblica letteraria d'Italia," published at the beginning of the century, drew up a plan, which proposed decentralized schools of literature to inculcate love of belles-lettres. A tragedy by Pallavicino "Ermenegeldo" showed how this adaptation of the classical model could be possible, and Gravina in his "Della tragedia," influenced undoubtedly by Caloprese's letter on the dramatic plot, attempts the interpretation of the Aristotelian rules to conform to the spirit of his own time. Tragedy was originally a satire "to condemn vices and the violence of the more powerful, and then took the form of an actual operation where more than in any other human action are discerned the force and variety of passions and the vicissitudes of fortune . . . Tragedy, reduced to its genuine idea, has come to give to the

people the fruit of philosophy and eloquence, to correct habit and speech." He insists on fidelity to nature in the plot since otherwise it would not explain "the nature of real governors, magistrates and princes who should be delineated in fiction with other names"—the old insistence on imitation as being the measure of literary creation with, however, an intenser signification. "Hence it is that good poets, carving the true on ancient characters, carve beyond their intention on present things; for truth never ages, never dies and is the same in all seasons; and human habits only receive the accidental and exterior variation of time, place, and education." The plot must go on with powerful effects, the strong triumphing over the weak, and the dramatist should subordinate everything to a single great culmination and "when the plot, conducted naturally and without apparent artifice, excites and corrects passions at the same time, and reveals human life, it will always be material and arrangement worthy of tragedy, whatever protagonist it may contain and whatever culmination, sad or joyful, may result." He combats Aristotle's theory of a mediocre character, without predominating virtues or faults, as unsuitable for tragic representation; if a character is developed consistently and powerfully then the effect will be more united in impression if one characteristic distinguishes him, and the more perfect the character the more perfect the effect. Gravina desires simplicity, unity, complete subordination of episode, and above all unity of action, consistency in portrayal of character. The constructive part of the thesis lies in his careful examination of the "Aminta" and "Pastor Fedo" in the light of theory already promulgated—perhaps the first example of applied critical theory in a modern sense, and his discussion of the use of the chorus and music as unsuitable for tragedy except when confined to the chorus shows considerable intuition of dramatic effect. It must be

remarked however that the critical standpoint is extrinsic in the sense that the outer qualities of tragedy are discussed, grouping and harmonisation of characters, scenic details, rhythm, verse, while the intrinsic or spiritual, in the sense of the creative impulse and the sympathy between poet and audience, or the psychological factors which control dramatic effects are carefully neglected. Gravina, while treating tragedies according to the rules of pure and simple reason, against pedantic rules and against Aristotle, while condemning the unity of place in the prologue to the five tragedies, does not rise beyond those interpreters of Aristotle whom he detests, and, instead of applying reason, absolutely allows tradition to influence him. The result is only another form of the old pedantic, empiric criticism, confused in tone and uncertain in tendency. Gravina quotes with some approval the discourses of Dacier and Corneille, seeing in them much the same contradictions and critical inconsistency as in his work on tragedy.

Gravina's attack on Aristotle is continued à l'outrance by Pier Jacopo Martello, who, in his entertaining series of dialogues, "Della Tragedia antica e moderna," the most revolutionary impression of 18th century opinion, deliberately sets aside the authority of Aristotle and gives him the interesting title of imposter. But before Martelli we must consider the theory of tragedy expressed by Muratori in the "Perfetta Poesia," who applies entirely his criticism of poetry to the criticism of drama. He quotes Apostolo Zeno—"Concerning drama, to tell sincerely my feeling, although I have written many, I am the first to give a vote of censure. Long practice has shown me that where it does not yield to many abuses, the chief function of such compositions, namely pleasure, is lost. The more we abide by the rules, the more we displease:"—but adds the proviso of drama as a delightful school of good manners, or a soothing chair of moral

lessons. Utility is more important than pleasure; the use of the love motif is condemned, the poet must be guided by pure virtue; "there is a general belief in Italy that one cannot be a poet without being or pretending to be in love." Poets cannot compose a perfect tragedy by allowing themselves to be influenced by music since "even if a perfect drama is written, it does not conform to the aim of tragedy when sung in the theatre; no terror, no emotion, no noble feeling awakens in the audience when dramas are sung." The aim of tragedy is to excite and purify the passions of man. "Real tragedies usually keep the audience attentive and cannot easily cause boredom, because their pleasure is turned and directed to the satisfaction not of the ear but of the soul, whose hall is immense, and because, while instructing and exciting the different feelings, they contain variety, the mother of delight." He favours absolute unity of place and limitation to a single scene; allows the use of the chorus to preach virtues and condemn vice; considers tragedy in verse is preferable to tragedy in prose since "verse well recited contains a secret noble harmony which delights greatly and increases without doubt the innate gravity of tragedy." Soliloquies, confidants, friends must be omitted as weakening the effect; epic narration or personal narration is not dramatic. The more notable part of his theory, which, so far, clings to the oldest traditions, lies in his condemnation of the "elemento amoroso" in French tragedy. "Among them few, if any, tragedies lack 'bassi amori' and for the most part the principal characters in the plot are introduced as maddened and degraded by this passion. The worst is that the ignorant learn the use of it, and he who abhorred it before begins to approve this sweet, and he who was already infected takes consolation. On those loves the argument of French tragedy is based or revolves round them; there is no fact taken from history and represented there in which

various loves are not imagined and the origin of all tragic actions is attributed to this passion. It matters not whether those heroes, either in the testimony of the ancients or common report died for any other reason, or that they were grave and prudent people far removed from such frivolities."

This amorous element provides a favourite centre of discussion during the Settecento right up to Alfieri and shows undoubtedly that Italian dramatic criticism of that period anticipated many of the strictures passed by Lessing on French drama. The most remarkable example of this critical anticipation lies in Maffei's "*Osservazioni sopra la Rodoguna*" published in the "*Rime e Prose*" where that peculiarly modern note we hear in Montani gives the whole review a lasting value and raises it to the distinction of being one of the few perfectly harmonious and finished pieces of dramatic criticism of the Settecento. Lessing, in his condemnation of Corneille's "*Rodogune*" in the "*Hamburgische Dramaturgie*" adds little or nothing to that of Maffei, and we can trace parallel passages almost as noteworthy as those instanced later in this essay in Calepio's letter to Bodmer. "French tragedies found favour and appeared divine things to Italians who had had in the Seicento nothing but the extravagances of comedy and the ineptitudes of the pastoral; such admiration was only possible through neglect of the finer Italian works, through lack of knowledge, for the French were of a romanesque taste without any sense for the expression of nature, of truth and the generally excellent parts of the poetic art." The action of the "*Rodogune*" lies in the madness of Cleopatra directed against her sons after the death of her husband, and terminates with her ruin. Step by step Maffei tears the play to pieces; the action is certainly not unsuited to the creation of a tragedy, but not a perfect tragedy nor anything like a perfect tragedy, since it contains atrocious and unpardonable crimes and

cannot conform to the function of tragedy which is to excite pity and fear—certainly not compassion, because no one can pity anyone who perishes through such wickedness; nor fear, because the audience could never believe such strange evil would ever come to them and cause ruin. Then Maffei defines the Aristotelian catharsis in much the same terms as Calepio and Lessing. "Compassion and fear occur when the fault is less serious, or, if serious, born in such a way that it makes excusable the delinquent as prescribed by art. The audience understands how much disaster comes from that and has pity on the sufferer, and fearing greatly for itself learns to guard against those errors in which it falls or can easily fall. Thus it was that Aristotle in the "Poetics" excluded villians entirely from tragedy." Maffei almost reaches the inner interpretation given by Calepio but not quite. Comparing his theory with the elementary statement of Gravina that compassion or terror or both may be generated in the spectator with the addition of other emotions, and the people accustomed to passion and terror gathered from the fictitious and having acquired complete indifference, are disposed to tolerate calamities in reality, or with the higher conception of Martello that tragedy by means of fear and pity calms in the spectators those very passions and causes them to pour the sadness devouring them on fictitious objects, just as a melancholy music bears away and soothes our melancholy, we come gradually and surely to the final interpretation put forward by Calepio. The interpretation of tragical catharsis develops naturally in Italian dramatic criticism, and owes nothing to foreign influence. Maffei goes on to enumerate the faults noted in the tragedy of "Rodogune," especially in the falsification of history. The poet may imagine outside of history but not contrary to it. The description of the succession to the throne of Demetrius by Seleucus or Antiochus is utterly against history, since neither in Appianus or Justinus,

where the history of Syria is written do we find that they were twins and thus the whole plot falls to pieces, for the author has no foundation for the belief that only the word of the queen could distinguish between them. Corneille contradicts history also in making Cleopatra drink poison of her own accord without compulsion from Antiochus. Maffei accuses Corneille of not understanding why Euripides was reproved by Aristotle for making Menelaus "evil without necessity" when it was inconsistent in Euripides to make him so wicked in one play and so estimable in another. "Royal or illustrious actions should be known either through history or fame, and not only can the poet not change them in their being but also cannot compose in caprice new ones, which, having been, would be known." Maffei examines offences against dramatic function, against history, against truth and now draws attention to deviations from probability, and in the enumeration of those faults practically includes the whole action of the play; the play falls between two extremes, extreme wickedness and extreme goodness. This criticism, the first prose work of Maffei, shows for the first time in the Settecento how the real principles of criticism can be applied to the elucidations of difficult problems in a work of literature and how destructive criticism can lead up to constructive and a profounder knowledge of the creative spirit. It is a work of genius in theoretical and practical critical principle and to it we can trace undoubtedly the inspiration and form of Calepio's "*Paragona della poesia tragica d'Italia con quella di Francia.*"

In the same modern tone we can listen to Pier Jacopo Martelli who, not content with affirming the nobler claims of the moderns, thrusts aside the authority of Aristotle and launches out a new scheme of his own, the Italian drama written in French Alexandrines. Martelli did not content himself with mere enunciations of theory but, encouraged by Orsi, Muratori and Manfredi, studied the drama of

Quinault, Corneille, Racine. la Fosse, la Grange, along with Greek tragedy, and strove to combine them into a national Italian drama; he began with "La Morte di Nerone" but finding the hendecasyllable unsuited to tragedy, adopted the Alexandrine and wrote a great number of such tragedies, for example, "Perselide," "Ifigenia," "Alceste," "M. Tullio Cicero," "Oedipo Coloneo," "Sisara." "Arianna," and "Oedipo Tiranno." The knowledge of French drama was perfected by a lengthy visit to Paris in 1713 where he met Fontenelle, de la Motte, Regnier, de la Hire, Capistrone and Crebillon. In his "Tragedia antica e moderna" the authority of the ancients is bluntly denied. "Allow me," he says in a dialogue with Aristotle, "to fulminate against those worshippers of your Greece, which is not God to me but only a part of the world, from which I recognise the advent of fine arts in Italy. There are certain people so jealous of the happiness of their century that they attribute all to the past and especially to those times when the Greeks flourished; they do not wish for any other glory than that of resembling them like a shadow to a body. I maintain that they are madly jealous of modern glory, and are evidently unjust to us who do not envy the ancients the distinction of being first inventors." He accuses the critics of copying each other and judging according to Greek standards; the reason why French drama pleases more than the ancient is because it is impossible to deceive the universe for ever. "My exemplar is infallible, being composed of nature and reason." The Greeks and the writings of Aristotle and his numerous commentators are worthless in this respect. "We imitate your statues because we find them perfect, but, if we do not find your poetry perfect in everything, why should we imitate it?" In tragedy there are unsurpassable virtues, and those are imitated not because we might not have been able to invent them but because the Greeks had precedence in time. "Certainly the

first writers have imitated nature, and we, also imitating nature, seem to imitate them." Martelli shows considerable originality in this insistence on the liberty of modern writers and the direct value of fidelity to nature as a single great characteristic of all poetry. There follows a passage curiously reminiscent of Schiiler when he criticises Burger—"They say that, instead of elevating his own spirit to depict the character of the heroes imitated by him Sophocles has made the heroes descend themselves to depict his own character, so that, instead of seeing characters of the tragedy, we only see the author." This accusation against the Greek dramatist expresses an ideal of art always true, the objective and interpretative nature of poetical characterisation; the poet sinks in his characters and not the characters in the poet. The merit of the dramatic poet lies in representation on the stage, and his success can be measured by the people alone, and not by any superior or private criterion. "I tell you, it is necessary to represent them to the learned, to the young and even to children, and this mingling together of every age, every sex, every rank and profession, forms the real people who never err in judgment, and when I said 'represent them' I meant something vastly different from that of reading them in a room where they only half appear." The same reference to the general taste lies in his view of dramatic intrigue; the Greeks did not love involved plots, neither did the French nor the Italians, and even if such a development has its value in comedies of the common people or of private gentlemen, even noble citizens, it has no place in tragedy which should be simple and natural to bring out the full effect of the plot. Thus Martelli returns to the 18th century predication of simplicity, probability and fidelity to nature, while in another passage we find some traces of a middle class ideal in tragic representation. "And we others, intent on a representation of persons of non-royal rank, reflect in some single incident

of our own life the strange groups of cases represented, and, growing accustomed to tolerate them as probable, end often in finding pleasure in them." The tragedy does not lack events which cause wonder but they must be so well knit together that the result is probable and the wonder excited reasonable. This reflection leads at once to the unity of action which Martelli, in common with the other critics of the Settecento and with Lessing considers the chief element in dramatic construction. "One and not several actions must be represented, and if tragedy was instituted to excite in our feelings compassion towards the calamities of him who did not deserve them and to instil in our minds fear of those crimes which, even committed with human or divine reason, are seen to be severely punished, it is desirable to excite both movements by a single intention."

The other unities are understood in a very broad sense by Martelli, and in this section at least he anticipates Becelli and the romantics; his argument in favour of conceding liberty is curiously modern and fundamentally sound. "Nothing is more perfect than the perfect idea of things, because every created thing is certainly always inferior to the creative ideal, but nothing is more defective than the wish to reduce the things themselves to the perfection of the idea, because that is beyond our powers and beyond the laws of nature. What confusion would not be born from this idea—perfection? It is not necessary to desire such perfection from the thing, as it is destroyed instead of being strengthened. Every kind of thing has its own limited perfection, beyond which one may find nothing but chimera. Tragedy would be more perfect if a single action by a single person at a single moment in a single place occurred; it would be undoubtedly more marvellous; but that which goes beyond the limits of the possible is absurd and fantastic. The glorified rigorous unity of place is

one of those perfections which exceed the reality of dramatic representation, and he who looks for this perfection, looks for monstrosities, fantastic irrealities . . . Thus the rigorous unity of place disappears in that which is seen. You will find it all the less in that which is not seen, because things occurring outside of the stage and related on it are a most essential part of the action and come up again in it." Few passages in 18th century criticism strike such a revolutionary tone as this, and even if Martelli does not carry out that ideal of liberty in his own plays the expression of such a theory demonstrates the whole modern tendency of dramatic criticism in that period. Similarly the unity of time, as invented or inserted by Corneille, is not recognised in the narrow sense of one day. It is very seldom that great changes in fortune and recognition of characters occur in one round of the sun, and since probability must govern dramatic representation Martelli has had no great scruple in expanding this time in such a way "that the wonderful is not abandoned as the Spaniards do at times, since it is not wonderful that great things succeed during a prolonged space of time, but on the other hand, it is against all probability that they should occur in a short space of time." He quotes as an example that Greek play where Deianira makes a shirt, covering with embroidery the poisonous shirt of Nessus. Now could this embroidery, even of a most elementary type, be done in one day, or even in one week? Then Deianira sends the finished shirt to her husband in Eubœa, a journey of many days. Hercules makes a sacrifice in Eubœa, which would take at least a day. The Greeks did not recognize the unity of time, there is then no reason why the Italians should. The Greeks only considered their own need in dramatic construction and especially in stage-representation.

Then Martelli considers French drama, and condemns at once the love motive because when love fills the action

the actor publicly acts in private and the prince as a commoner, and when princes must unfold their love-affairs and thus lose all dignity in the eyes of the audience it would be better to leave love out of the question. The fine dramas of Corneille and Racine, although very moving in noble expressions of feeling and even love, are often weakened by too much refinement of thought in amorous meditations, by excessive play of evil, by too great insistence on this element in characterisation. The love-passion, if not handled in a tragic sense shows up too vividly the weakness of the principal character, and instead of presenting a hero to us the dramatist depicts a lover. All the other passions contribute to the formation of a character, love to its ruin. Martelli condemns Racine's "Mithridate." "If Racine, in the moment where Mithridate is deliberating such a terrible revenge, shows him also as a lover of Monime, and impels that great mind to disclose with jealous malice the love-affairs of herself and his son Xefare, this change in passion ruins him more in my eyes than even the Romans ruined him, and transforms him from a terrible old man, a great captain and a magnanimous vindicator of monarchy into a madman, a sly fool, a boaster, and instead of being venerable he becomes ridiculous." In "Phedre" Racine is not content with making Phedre fall in love with Hippolyte but makes Hippolyte fall in love with Areccia, and Hippolyte, by becoming involved in this double love, loses dignity since he is not entirely devoted to Areccia and does not resist Phedre in a convincing and admirable fashion. It is merely a question of satisfaction; when satiety comes, he may love elsewhere. In both cases, Mithridate and Hippolyte, if history made them so, then Racine should have abandoned history or altered it to suit since the poet is not obliged to represent incidents as they occurred but as they should occur. Martelli sweeps away the Muratorian and Gravinian doctrines of

conformity to history in characterisation; but his criticism of Racine is fundamentally true and reminds us of Lessing again in the "*Hamburgische Dramaturgie*." Then he condemns the introduction of confidants since a man cannot possibly disclose his whole soul to a companion, and the great pleasure of dramatic character is this close correspondence of expression with inner emotion. The only time when a character delivers his soul to us in soliloquy, and in this insistence on monologue Martelli again anticipates Romantic drama; "in Soliloquies the part of the actor has no fear of outer disturbance and yields itself to full sincerity."

Soliloquies and asides are all permitted, because we are quite willing to concur in the illusion and belief that other actors on the stage are for the moment deaf.

In the Fourth Session of the "*Tragedia antica e moderna*" and the short essay "*Del Verso Tragico*" Martelli gives his reason for choosing the French Alexandrine, and here again he shows a very real knowledge of dramatic effect. "In tragedy, to bring to the audience the pleasure which comes from the harmony of verse in the moment of listening, rimes should be less expected and I like to hear them contiguous so that I can judge of the measure, the verse, and enjoy the pleasure of harmony." He mentions the possibility of tragedy being written in prose and quotes an Italian prose translation of a French tragedy. His theory of expression remains quite characteristic of the new tendencies—"I always conclude that the Hero should speak like the commoner, and if he will not pronounce vile and ugly words it is because ugly and vile are not his thoughts but noble and kind." Expression corresponds directly with feeling, and the dramatic representation is transparent, no veil coming between the character and the audience.

Between Martelli and Calepio, who develops still further the former's ideas, stands Antonio Conti who,

however original he may be in esthetic as applied to poetry, has little new to show in dramatic theory; but he does attempt to reduce the action of tragedy to an inner ideal, especially in the consistency of action and character. He introduces into Italian drama a purely historical type, and his examination of the relations of dramatic representation and the truth of history provides a body of criticism of even more intense interest than a treatise in extenso; the introductions to the four tragedies—"Junius Brutus," "Marcus Brutus," "Cæsar," and "Drusus"—with the letter to Martelli contain Conti's theory. The additional French unity of interest is admitted in "Junius Brutus" "the tragedy requires no more than ten hours . . . Beside the three unities of action, place and time, there is that which the French call unity of interest, because the spectator, really admiring a single person and excited in him alone, is only interested in him; admiration and compassion is all for Brutus." This additional interpretation adds a psychological value to dramatic theory; Martelli insists on unity of action. Conti on unity of interest, and both unities lead inevitably to an ideal type. In a strictly logical sense unity of action could only be possible when action is not diffuse but concentrated on the development of one character alone; that one character could be aided by minor characters and the dramatist might also summon to his aid several episodes to bring into relief the main theme, but neither the minor characters nor the episodes could have any significance other than psychological since tragedy is concerned with emotion, morality, history, philosophy even, and ends with character—portrayal to symbolise that intention. Unity of action ultimately coincides with unity of interest in the same sense expressed by Conti; but the latter unity possesses value inasmuch as it lays weight immediately on characterisation, and eliminates any possibility of confusion between material and spiritual action. This consideration lends almost

symbolical meaning to Conti's description of the action in "Junius Brutus"—"The zeal of Brutus is the action, or as I usually term it, the cause of the action of the tragedy, as the anger of Achilles is the cause of the action of the Iliad and the sovereign curiosity of Oedipus that of the tragedy of Sophocles. The zeal of Brutus is directed to the maintenance of the liberty established in Rome as the anger of Achilles is directed to revenge against those who injured him, and the curiosity of Oedipus to the investigation into the death of Laius. Thus the action is one, of one, by one. Brutus begins the action by inciting the people with his exhortations to expel the Tarquins; Brutus alone continues it by adopting the measures necessary to maintain the decree of the people. Brutus alone having discovered the plot makes the remedy invincible for all time by affecting it with the death of his children; hence the zeal of Brutus is directed entirely to the exclusion of the Tarquins and the maintenance of the liberty introduced, the object or end necessary to tragic action." But Conti errs on the psychological side; a description of a single emotion or propelling force cannot be affected without contrast, without the additional emotions or forces to throw that emotion into relief either by resistance or by the subordination.

In like fashion he introduces the other three tragedies, assigning a different motive to each—"The moral intention is or should be first in the mind of the poet and is the last in execution, since, after the composition of the tragedy, in revision and correction one must see that it symbolises in individuals the abstract idea which is to be impressed on the mind and which, changed into dogma or maxim, is of value through recollection at opportune moments. In Brutus this maxim, reduced to a moral proposition, is the zeal for liberty preserved against even the ties of blood." Conti thus gives an inner unity to

drama of a moral type in the sense that one great emotion should continue and even remain later in the mind of the audience. In this conception of the aim of tragedy he sets aside the Aristotelian catharsis and brings dramatic effect into line with life; reducing effect to moral and the feeling of immersion in the moral intention to the psychological basis, he destroys at once what we are accustomed to term dramatic situation—the battle of wills or even events until a verdict is rendered possible, victory for the one side, defeat for the other or moral victory for the defeated side and moral disaster for the victorious. The results may vary indefinitely but they invariably arise from conflict, external or internal. The dramatic effect of *Brutus* would not then be realization of love of liberty since that alone would belong to epic, but the struggle between human affection and this love ending with the triumph of the latter: but in his tragedy *Conti* does not develop this struggle and contents himself with mere statement while the one moral theme is described. In a later tragedy, however, "*Marcus Brutus*," there is a clearer idea of this conflict—"In every tragedy, the action of which is one and one the chief actor, the incidents can only arise from the action and character of the actor. They arise from the action when exposition is made of the peculiar, necessary or probable causes which go to produce it; they arise from the character of the actor when, in exposition, his passions mingle with those of the other actors who oppose him; in the former there is variety and novelty joined to wonder, companions in great enterprises; in the latter the contrast of vehement passions produces what the French term 'situation,' in which the mind and heart of the spectator is greatly amazed and agitated by the force of that contrast. Then the dominant character produces the knot and the loosening of the action." But the emotional unity of struggle necessary to tragedy is also lacking in this

definition and dramatic situation becomes merely a fencing-match of opposite characters: the doctrine, of variety, novelty, wonder, of a most respectable tradition in the Settecento, has little bearing on dramatic effect. In the preface to "Drusus," however, a more or less esthetic conception of tragedy is outlined, The tragic character is midway between the historical and philosophic, partaking of both: it is necessary then to distinguish between the poet and historian since Conti includes poetry in philosophy. "The privilege of the poet is much broader, and, if to him be conceded the faculty of being silent on many circumstances and motives which the historian must note, I do not see why he should not select those real events which, even if distant in time and place, refer to one object and enter as harmonious parts into the organisation of a regular whole and in which the unity of a certain ideal time and place, united to the quality and plan of the action, is not violated." Even as Martelli he will not observe too mechanically this double unity—"An action, as action, is independent of a fixed place and time since everything consists in the order and contrast of motives, means and obstacles referring to one object or one aim." In Conti again the romantic rejection of mechanical rules becomes evident. The action must be purely psychological, purely intrinsic in the chief character, and in this sense Conti expresses a doctrine of poetical ideal of a plastic nature—"The most distinguished painters and sculptors took ideas from the natural and coupled together in a statue or picture that which was most finely proportioned in various parts of men different from each other: the finest poets also copied the historic truth but in raising it to the ideal added so many modifications to it that it was no longer the same." Conti touches at once on the whole theory of expression raised later by the Romantics and de Sanctis: his conception of poetical transformation merges into that later theory of expression

being in itself an individual and original creation and every idea, every picture, every image found in expression must belong to the poet only who expresses himself thus. Creation is expression, form and ultimately life in the spiritual sense. This phrase of Conti thus possesses a peculiar value. In an inner application he then considers pity and fear without however fusing them together in one purifying emotion—"Among the passions which have for subject evil they choose the two passions which influence us most—one withdrawing the soul out of itself and the other leading it back to itself to impel it to flee the aspect of evil. Those two passions are pity and fear. Pity unites us to the object of our pity, we cannot see others suffering evil without feeling it in ourselves through similarity of nature, and the more the similarity increases the more our pity . . . Fear, placing us in the position of the actor stricken by calamity, makes us recognise his disaster as inevitable either through fate or punishment, and makes us feel it in such a way that not knowing how to make it good we try to flee its aspect." Martelli came close to the Lessingian doctrine of pity and terror; Conti brings both into direct dependence on the soul, but otherwise he does not bring this union into one emotion. The development becomes, however, more marked, and now in Calepio this fushion is reached which Lessing preached so enthusiastically in the "*Haniburgische Dramaturgie*." Conti lays importance most of all on this new theory of gradation—"It is necessary in tragedy to prepare dialogue and passion for the mind so that it goes on, develops and resolves by itself the action represented and distributes over it the degrees of passion corresponding to the motions undertaken. The mind does all that without art. Art belongs to the poet who, gradating the action, arouses successively in the mind the ideas and feelings which give it pleasure." Thus the dramatist must take account of this intuitive

sympathy and strive to bring it everywhere into play. In the "Dissertazione su l'Atalia del Racine" there is a noteworthy passage where Conti discerns in ancient epic a tragical function identical with that of tragedy itself—"I would prefer that some interpreters of Aristotle would not desire compassion to fall on the protagonist of tragedy or the highest priest who directs the action from beginning to end. I beg them to reflect that in Homer's "Iliad," the model of tragedies, the action falls on the anger of Achilles and compassion and fear fall on the Greeks and Trojans, and especially on Patroclus and Hector. The "Electra" is governed by the same art. Orestes to revenge the death of Agamemnon, his father, vows to punish with death the murderers, Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. In this intention he enters Argos with the old man, conceals a way of deceiving Clytemnestra, lays at the feet of Agamemnon's tomb his hair and milk, makes himself known to Electra, presents himself to his mother and introduces himself with her into the palace where he first kills Clytemnestra and then Aegisthus. Orestes thus ponders, prepares and executes the action and is the protagonist or principal actor of the tragedy and yet compassion and terror falls on Electra who, as the most tragic person, dominates the tragedy." Conti clears away gradually misconception hitherto in force and prepares undoubtedly for a surer and more vital theory of tragedy.

This critical examination of "Athalie," along with Maffei's "Observations on 'Rodogune,'" belongs to the finest examples of applied criticism in a modern esthetic sense in the entire Settecento and does reach an ideal evaluation not to be scorned even now. In common with other critics Conti has destructive criticism as well as appreciative to apply to French drama—"French tragedies, which not unjustly are termed the first-born of romances, retain two things, which do not conform to genuine imitation,

confidants and love-affairs." Confidants provide always an epic motive, being used for explanatory purposes. "The great Corneille introduces into 'Rodogune' such a long narration that, occupying an entire scene, it is interrupted and continued in another. Racine has not avoided confidants although he has tried to introduce them as necessary several times, either as brought from distant countries as in 'Bajazet' or as ignorant of the hidden secrets of their princes, as in 'Phedre' and 'Mithridate.' But there is always that indefinable thing which shows us that the actor does not need so much to narrate or hear from others the story, as the poet, who must inform the audience." Conti also condemns the too-rigorous observation of the unities—"The French and among them Racine, have found a way of knitting events together in succession where one character remains always on the scene or is combined with another, and when this is based on good reason the rule is suitable for the filling of the stage, but one should not be so scrupulous in this rule that no change should take place, no alteration, when the necessity of action demands, that on meeting an odious character all the others should flee. A greater inconvenience than the confinement of the scene is the hard necessity imposed by others on themselves to observe the unity of place, to make a conspiracy be plotted in the very chamber of the tyrant, as occurs in Corneille's 'Cinna.' " The basis of hostile criticism is not different from that of Muratori, Maffei, Martelli, but Conti gives it a more scientific application: the criteria of poetry are merged in those of drama and the double movement, intensification and union of critical ideals into one all-applicable with great liberty in art, develops more and more until in Becelli it opens out to almost a romantic aspect. In Calepio, however, intensification remains the one ideal and liberty only incidentally.

It is not necessary to go into detail about the "Merope"

of Maffei and the numerous controversies centering round it : every aspect has already been treated by Italian critics, and the general body of real dramatic criticism contained in them is very slight, too slight indeed to be worthy of examination. “ Merope ” was the first great Italian—and not French—or Greek-Italian product of the movement towards a national drama, and naturally the old quarrels of the *anciens* and *modernes* revived on its publication. The edition of 1747 (from the first edition of 1713) contains practically all that the Settecento wrote on the tragedy : in it appear—Avviso al Lettore da Cavalucci, Avvertimento al Lettore del Sig. Marchese G.G. Orsi, Ragionamento del P. Sebastiano Paoti, Avvertimento di Giulio Cesare Becelli, Osservazioni critiche del Sig. Abbate Lazzarini, Confutazione della dette Osserva. del Maffei, Lettera di M. de Voltaire indirizzata al Maffei, Risposta del Maffei. With those writers who were undoubtedly the most important critics as critics in the early Settecento, mention must be made of the “ Journal de Trevoux ” where in August, 1736, a favourable review appeared. The most original contributions to the dispute are the unpublished letter of Calepio, extracts from which are given later and isolated observations in the “ Paragone della poesia tragica d'Italia con quella di Francia.”

III.

THE CALEPIAN THEORY OF TRAGEDY AND
THE CRITICISM OF FRENCH DRAMA.

III.

THE only published work of Pietro Calepio is the "Paragone," already mentioned, which Bodmer published in 1732 through the firm of Corrado Orelli in Zurich. A later, posthumous edition in 1770, published in Venice by Zatta, contains several additions of importance; notably "Aggiunta toccante la tragedie di M. de la Motte" amplified, "Osservazioni sopra M. Bruto del Conti, Memorie d'osservazioni concernenti la Merope de M. Voltaire e quella del Marchese Maffei, Confutazioni di molti sentimenti disposti da Guisepper Salio." Calepio left two tragedies in MSS. written in "versi sciolti" "Perducca" and "Seleuco." Those and the letters included by Bodmer in the "Briefwechsel uber das poetische Geschmack," with that article on the "Merope" noted later, formed the literary output of the Bergamascan count. Calepio's work continues that of Martelli, Maffei and Conti, with a more definite intention, namely to construct from this comparative criticism of French and Italian tragedy the ideal which the Italian should follow in the creation of a national drama—criticism in the finest sense of the word, constructive, esthetic, philosophic even. The hedonism and didacticism of the Renaissance have been fused together into real criticism, and only perhaps in

Calepio does the function of criticism and exegesis or predication receive full acknowledgement; criticism had become an independent, self-sufficient art with little obedience to either philosophy or ethics, an art based entirely on individual reason, individual investigation into nature and not into poetics alone. The whole post-Aristotelian development of poetics and dramatic legislation is brushed aside. The complicated structure of Renaissance and the French classical theories, of the function and unities of tragedy, the architectonic conception of Gravina in his effort to establish a national drama on classical lines, and the efforts of the later Seicentist and early Settecentist commentators of Aristotle only inspire Calepio with desire to go direct to Aristotle, and in him those two great movements in this century, revaluation of the Aristotelian canons in the light of reason as defined by the Cartesians and the closer study of nature, of psychology and human mentality, meet and find direct utterance in the examination of French and Italian tragedy. This comparative, destructive-constructive method had already been employed by Gravina in his treatise on tragedy, the subject of criticism being the work of Tasso and Guarini, but Gravina never reached a definite criterion, never rose definitely above comment into full construction or revaluation of dramatic ideals, and his own achievement in actual tragic construction proves this uncertainty. Martello suffered to some degree from the same inability to apply theory to construction or synthesise many ideas into one dominating, an ultimate criterion to which reference would always be made, but in "Sisara" and "Perselide" he cuts adrift from the French models and does create an individual drama reflecting his own theories. In Conti the ideal application of theory to construction is reached in one historical tragedy at least, "Drusus," where dramatic art has at last achieved something notable—the double influence of

Shakespeare and the French has contributed to form an Italian drama as fine as any written in the Settecento before Alfieri. But, even in Conti, the fusion of the old combatant elements is not complete, and it is practically impossible to deduce from his scattered and fragmentary utterances a definitely synthetic criterion. He undertook too many grandiose critical schemes, too many conceptions which singly would take a whole life time to realise, to amplify that treatise on tragedy so long projected. Calepio terminates that period of shifting dramatic ideals by a single theory illustrated in and deduced from French and Italian tragedy, and no other dramatic critic before or after him, neither Zanetti, Becelli, Gorino-Corio, Baraffaldi nor Metastasio, has examined in such a modern and constructive fashion tragic drama. It will be necessary to outline the theory of tragedy outlined by Calepio before examining or defining his attitude towards French Drama; in technique his discussion of the function and form of verse remains even now of value since his theories are fundamentally sound.

Calepio quotes Corneille's definition of the Aristotelian catharsis as consisting in moving pity and terror by means of an illustrious actor who falls through some fault from happiness to misery. "Trouvons quelque modération à la rigueur de ces règles du Philosophe ou du moins quelque favorable interprétation pour n'être pas obligés de condamner beaucoup de poèmes, que nous avons vus réussir sur nos théâtres." Corneille aims then at making his plays a criterion of the rules and not the rules of the plays. Compassion and fear however cannot be limited to consideration of one actor or even of several but of the whole play as an emotional unity: to obtain a corresponding unity of emotion in the spectator that emotional unity in the play must be definitely understood in terms of the spirit of the spectator himself. What unity will produce this effect and be true to the construc-

tion of tragedy? What esthetic result will be obtained which effects both drama and spectator? What artistic intention is implied in drama itself? To answer those questions Calepio goes back to Aristotle and gives an esthetic definition of the function of tragedy as described in the "Poetics." Calepio's theory of catharsis is at the one time the most complete and the most modern in the Settecento, and Lessing adds nothing to it in the "Hamburgische Dramaturgie." The highest aim of perfect tragedy is to purge in an agreeable fashion the excesses of passion by means of compassion and terror: this purgation results most clearly when the chief character is not exempt from some defect. Corneille is of opinion that such a purgation is quite a good idea, but always impracticable, and mentions the "Cid" as fulfilling every condition, but this—"If I am allowed to anatomise that plot better than its author, the motive which produces the catastrophe is the revenge by Rodrigue of the insult to his father . . . Chimène is guilty of nothing in her legitimate love of Rodrigue and thus does not fulfill the conditions of a protagonist . . . Corneille tries to make good his opinion by saying that the 'Oedipus' of Sophocles, which is generally considered perfect, does not carry out this purgation. But this Frenchman is mistaken in finding no fault in 'Oedipus.' " Calepio then disagrees with the theory of Dacier, who says that in "Oedipus" are violence, pride and temerity, and he is, therefore, by nature useless for the purposes of tragedy; of Tarasson also, who affirms the moral intention of Sophocles to lie in the maxim, that one cannot escape a crime when the Gods will it so. The French criticism, being purely extrinsic and therefore superficial, glosses over the profound inner significance of the Greek tragedy, and takes note only of the dramatic characterisation without striving to bring drama into the life of the spirit itself: drama may be considered in itself alone, apart from us, played on a stage very distant from us

in place and time, but as such it can have no real existence save in history, or it may be considered through the emotions it inspires in us, a material part of the spirit. The French have hitherto been content with the conception of the other outside tragedy, forgetting that tragedy could only exist in our emotion and not by itself: the measure of that tragic force would then be the measure of our own emotions, and the only criterion applicable to those emotions is exactly this of emotional purgation by means of pity and terror: pity and terror are united in ultimate effect and indivisible, being the relation between cause and effect, an integral emotional function. This identity is affirmed by Calepio in a letter to Bodmer in definite terms—"pity alone does no good, even if it may move the audience greatly in those tragedies where the innocent die when their death is not a consequence depending on the punishment of the chief character: on the contrary, where those suffer who are not free from some fault, pity gives force to fear through the interest it causes, and thus tragedy acquires its true efficacy." "Those two effects are not really two ways which separately lead to one goal." Emotional unity remains the function of tragedy, and its work is purely esthetic in the sense that passions are raised and purified by art to a clearer and nobler conception of life. "Certain Frenchmen, desirous of increasing the glory of Racine's '*Phèdre*,' have blamed Euripides unjustly for having taken as subject in *Hippolytus* a perfect hero, who dies calumniated unworthily: but they have not observed that his death is punishment for the contempt with which he speaks of Venus . . . In the '*Electra*,' the principal aim of the poet is apparently to show the penalty decreed by the Gods on Clytemnestra for her impiety, and make her punishment more endurable through compassion towards her oppressed children." Calepio examines Greek tragedy from this esthetic standpoint to support him in refuting

the assertions of the French critics. In the "*Guinti postume attinenti al Paragone*," he criticises the theory put forward by Antonio Conti in his preface to "*Drusus*," "that with making the wicked triumph, human passions are corrected more fully and the indirect pleasure which is born from knowledge of our justice in the sorrow we experience for the oppression of the innocent, is more efficacious than the direct pleasure which is born from the happiness of the innocent and the degradation of the wicked." Tragedy does not aim at inducing people to hatred and horror of great wickedness, because the latter is not common and is generally hated without requiring any incentive from art. Great wickedness is not artistic and must be avoided. The statement that such pleasure is more genuine and efficacious since it encourages our humanity to pity the sorrows of others through the similarity we have with the sufferer, and moves us to love relief from them, is a subtlety of Castelvetro adopted by Conti. "The emotional effect of drama must proceed from the chief character alone and not from any extrinsic moral reflection, and in this significance we must understand the relation of the poet to historical drama. Unity of action will not permit of divagation since efficacy of impression must always be the aim; material of drama is different from action: the poet can adopt history for material, isolate one, or several historical events, but action is formed by the art used by the poet to connect the events or details of history in order to subdue them to one passion, and this passion, that incentive or purgative emotion." Calepio defines them the identity of unity of action and unity of passion, which Dilthey assigns to Lessing's theory of tragedy.

From this purgative standpoint he examines French tragedy and the "*Cato*" of Addison: many French tragedies aim only at flattering passions, and not at promoting compassion or any edifying feeling—the objection put

forward by Rousseau in his letter to d'Alembert—and the "Zaire" of Voltaire appears most guilty of all. The character of Zaire in itself provides an ideal motive for correcting passions by means of punishment, which succeeds to the pleasure of encouraging them, but this motive has nothing in common with the esthetic intention desired by Calepio, and while remark is made to Nerestan: "Hélas! elle offensait notre dieu, notre loi: et ce dieu la punit d'avoir crié pour toi," Zaire is killed just at the time when she is disposed to embrace the true religion. She is willing to renounce every happiness to be derived from marriage with Orosman and, refusing the nuptials so eagerly desired by him, she resolves to give consent to the offer of her brother and even protests, at danger of being condemned to punishment, "she will not betray the Blood where she is born, and prays to the true God that he will enlighten and guard her." The death which follows without possibility of carrying out this pious intention only tends to weaken our faith in God and not to make us believe it a price paid for evil: Voltaire thus avoids the real aim of tragedy, and the action has no real dramatic conclusion. Similarly Addison's "Cato" lacks conviction through super-abundance of flowery speech, and the subject lends itself more to creation of an example of heroism than to communication of tragic emotions. In the case of Cæsar, as represented by Conti and Voltaire, he should have been made "suitable for that pity required of tragedy," and it could have been done without abusing history, because however much Cæsar aspired to absolute power, yet, when the Republic was undermined by civil disorders, a monarchic regime would have been opportune and even necessary to preserve its greatness. Calepio's examination of Voltaire's "César" shows considerable intuitive knowledge. "M. de Voltaire, like many Frenchmen who aim more at illustrating their dramatic plots by vivid characters than at adapting them to the chief aim of

tragedy, has undertaken to depict a contrasting mass of emotions which, in their contrast, are mutually weakened. On one side Brutus, inspired by the duty of defending his country, experiences sorrowful reluctance to assent to the conspiracy against the life of his father, Cæsar: then he goes to greater lengths than the other conspirators, and although he could quite conscientiously have left the murder of Cæsar to others, he pushes the blade home himself." How is it possible to reconcile such a feeling with such an action. Instead of making this inner conflict of duty and love the tragic motive, Voltaire brushes aside all conflict with the excuse that the death of a tyrant justifies any moral unscrupulousness or lack of consistency in characterisation, and in this drama the conspirators merit no compassion, and least of all Brutus. Conti's drama is criticised in the same terms, and the theory of the death of Cæsar as a "tyrant and oppressor of his country," is not dramatic in a really spiritual application. "From the punishment of the fault of others proceeds terror, when we hold it easy for us to fall into a weakness similar to that of the sufferer. But the great body of the spectators is too far from believing themselves exposed to so great peril as that incurred by such a rare atrocity." The death of tyrants instead of causing pity and terror is generally viewed with satisfaction.

Calepio refutes the principle adopted by Gravina in introducing into Italian drama the Greek model without discrimination of what is good and what is imperfect in Greek tragedy—the principle now adopted by himself in his criticism of French and Italian tragedy. Acting again on the new interpretation of pity and fear, he examines the "Cid," "Sophonisbe" and "Oedipe" of Corneille, the "Phèdre," "Britannicus," "Iphigenie," "Bajazet," "Berenice" and "Athalie" of Racine. In the "Cid," the condemnation of Rodrigue and the duel only excite fear and no compassion: dramatic effect becomes a

mixture of anxiety while his last words to his sorrowful father have a certain bitterness, harshness not in keeping with the real tenderness of the moment. In "Iphigenie," a collection of the better passages in Euripides, the author is only intent on saving the young lady's life to please the audience, and pretends to excite a useful fear not unallied with compassion through Eriphyle who dies in her place, but the effect is obscure and ultimate impressions dimmed by this double interest. The play should have been named "Orestes," because entirely innocent people cause only ephemeral pity which vanishes with a happy ending. In "Berenice," one cannot believe that her calamity would purge the violence of love-passion: it would be ridiculous to imagine that one would be warned against falling in love through her example or free oneself from such a passion; Mithridates arouses terror on account of the king's cruelty (a remark already made by Martelli); "Bajazet" is based on an action which does not incite pity, since the hero deliberately meets a death he could avoid; "Athalie," with its fine air of antiquity and simplicity in construction, causes no edifying terror, since the action revolves round the threatened death of an innocent child. In "Phèdre" alone does Calepio find the perfect tragedy.

Having defined the aim and function of tragedy, what elements in tragedy lend efficacy to those disasters which fulfil the aim desired? Those things are necessary to the development of tragedy in this intention of causing pity and fear—wonder, recognition and passion. In the last, Calepio is original, while we find in a 17th century writer, Caloprese, a similar theory to that of wonder, and in Martelli, the theory of "agnizione," or hidden identity, finds detailed expression. In all three, however, and especially in passion, Calepio gives a more esthetic application. "The genuine wonder of tragic poetry consists in horror derived from unexpected means; fear and pity become more expressive when we happen to see horrible

cases by those ways least suspected of peril and more common evils appear of less moment than uncommon—Evils become more impressive when they come from where good is expected. The force of tragic representation lies then in this sudden awakening of interest, and the equally swift feeling of surprise leading directly to emotional sympathy: tragedy relies then on this element of the unexpected for directing emotion in the audience. The audience sees transformation in actual being, gains new and therefore exciting perspectives and this novelty, corresponding directly between spiritual representation and acceptance, makes total comprehension in an esthetic sense possible. The epic takes pity and fear from tragedy, since the epic poem is a more general representation of human life. Hence it can without harm and should contain the imitation of every motion: this does not occur in tragedy, a more limited poetry and more susceptible to prejudice from extrinsic additions.” Epic and drama are not entirely different as poetry and in their relation to human life: the criterion refers back immediately to life, drama shows certain aspects, epic the whole of life. Calepio criticises adversely French theory and practice in this respect. “French poets do not apparently devote much attention to this peculiar wonder. P. Corneille has striven to give delight in some dramas with heroic examples only, the essence of tragic delight being in an accessory admiration or wonder. Frenchmen usually postulate as necessary to tragic poetry heroes as great as those of epic, and here they are mistaken.” The nature of drama is inner, united, spiritual; of epic universal, and special circumstances must govern characterisation in both.

The second element, recognition, arises from the theory of concealed identity in a principal character as forming the basis and motive of tragic action, and the subsequent recognition in a critical moment intensifies the dramatic effect, leading to tragic catharsis in the death of that

character now recognised. Corneille scorned this theory of recognition as lending opportunity for pathetic sentiments, since the action of any character against beloved persons who are, however, unknown to him only adds to dramatic effect in the catastrophe when recognition of those persons dawns on the unfortunate actor. But, in Calepio's opinion, this retardation of the catastrophe of recognition is a supreme merit in tragic representation, since the final pity reaches a climax and impresses the audience, without any weakening from a subsequent anticlimax. The ideal should be—development of action and character to a climax when catastrophe makes an impressive end: unity of passion must remain the dominant motive in creation. But Corneille sees in tragedy a constant battle of passions, which begins with the play and continues to the end: the action is begun outside the play, and the actual play means only a protracted episode with all the weakness of episode. "The contests of passion leave languid the end which should be the most powerful, since emotions excited by the battle of duty with natural inclination or of the latter with the passions, instead of increasing in strength, decline; they cannot endure for so long a time." Those are not the real aim of tragedy. Calepio mentions "Cinna" as a description of those conflicting passions, but not as a tragedy.

The third element is passion, the careful psychological gradation of every character towards this element or aim, compassion and fear. In this section at least the theory of Calepio remains of lasting value. The tendency, already noted, to dispense with material as a criterion and concentrate absolutely on a psychological drama receives here a final expression. It should be possible to describe emotion and its response in emotion, the reaction of emotional stimuli to the emotions themselves, the answer and reply of characters in purely psychological intuition; it should also be possible to develop delicately, surely,

exquisitely, those little magnetic touches mutually thrilling, and in a last perfect consummation join them together in one great spiritual impulse, one great emotional impression; it should be possible to discard all material and extrinsic data altogether and make drama absolutely intrinsic, a reality of spirit. Such an ideal Calepio has in his mind in defining this element of passion. Three considerations must be noted in passion, the qualities of that to be suffered, the preparation by which is made efficacious, pity towards those who fall into misery, and the third, the reactions which their suffering requires in order to produce perfect effect on the audience. In this grouping of reactions or emotional effects, Calepio remarks a tendency in Italian drama to weave incidents in such a fashion that final emotions are weakened by diversion, the characteristic of our nature being to neutralise one feeling with another. Thus one emotion should not preponderate over the others to the exclusion of passion and fear, and characters of a cruel nature or hateful in manners blind the people in their indignation to the benefit of fear and compassion. The French err also in this matter, and Calepio criticises with remarkable insight the "Rodogune" of Corneille, "Pierre Corneille, among all the defects he discovers in his own plays, never attributes this defect to himself: thus he has no hesitation in preferring "Rodogune" to all the other plays, and yet, this defect is most notable in it. The author is of the belief that he has found new ways of making tragedy terrible and pitiful, ways which will be for strength, with result equal to the finest practices of the ancients; he represents most evil persons as pursuing the noblest, provided the latter are saved. Hence he bears in triumph the cruel persecution by Cleopatra of her sons, saying, that the pity inspired by their misery is not overcome by aversion to her, because their salvation is in sight. But this defence is confuted by fact and reason. By fact,

because Seleucus, one of her sons, dies by his own hand, and with a cruelty much more intolerable than that of Medea, she comes on the scene to gloat tranquilly on his misfortune, revolving in her mind another similar; by reason, because the hope of liberation of the good, in addition to suspending that complete pity which would be felt for them on completion of disaster, does not prevent us from understanding the cruelty of the authoress of their misfortunes, and does not sweep away the anger of indignation." Calepio quotes also Racine's "*Iphigenie*," where a rival of the same name is introduced, who dies in her place, the sacrifice of the innocent diverting the audience in its aversion from the feeling of pity, which in Euripides constitutes the chief pleasure. Of great help in this passion are the feelings of minor characters, since our senses like cords in unison vibrate correspondingly.

The discussion of psychological elements leads to the conception maintained by Calepio against Conti and Martelli of the defective hero—a person of faulty virtue, neither too perfect nor too inhuman. He adopts, as Gravina at an earlier period, the Aristotelian principle, that catharsis can only be inspired by a hero who falls justifiably, but not so deservedly as to blind us to the pity of it and the fear that such a misfortune could happen to us. Corneille, in his "*Discours de poème dramatique*," explains the virtue pertaining to the tragic character, not through that quality which makes him more worthy of pity, but through a "*caractère brillant et élevé d'une habitude vertueuse ou criminelle selon qu'elle est propre et convenable à la personne qu'on introduit*," and affirms that every person, even wicked, is capable of tragic development; but this Frenchman "falls into error, because tragedy does not wish of necessity an heroic virtue unaccompanied by any weakness whatever, but only as much as is requisite for winning the goodwill of the

audience." Wonder cannot be inspired by a vicious character "which even if it can produce some pleasure ought not to be sought, since poetry loves only that which leads to edification, and this undoubtedly should be the principle aim: moral good is the worthiest and noblest goal which an art can have. The pleasure proposed by Corneille is far from the correct aim, since it tends to gloss over and make the same vice agreeable." Corneille misrepresents the function of tragedy in stating, "that in his days two benefits are found which do not occur in Greek tragedy, punishment of evil works and reward of good and the profit derived from the strength of examples." Calepio repeats what has since become a commonplace in criticism of French classical drama—"Racine must be praised for making men as they should be; Corneille, on the contrary in the desire to make them as they should be, makes them as they cannot be, and on this plan the majority of French tragedies are constructed." But credit must be given them for having softened historical fact to render a character worthy of pity, as Antiochus in "*Rodogune*," but in most cases only subsidiary characters are involved.

In tragedy, as in every other form of literature, where delineation of character is necessary, close consistency between action, speech and the characters must be observed; every action and every discourse remains improbable without it. In addition to the five attributes quoted by Horace—condition, age, sex, function or office, and nation—necessary to preserve this consistency, Calepio adds a six—equality, which forms an integral part of "*decoro*," fidelity to character. Equality has here a purely psychological application, and means unswerving truth in delineation, no inconsistency, no deviation, no interruption in character portrayal. Calepio quotes the "*Essex*" of Thomas Corneille where the dramatist degrades the status of Essex by making him mad with

love and making him die more from despair than greatness of soul. Another mistake is that of elevating too much the character of the women, giving them, weaker by nature, the courage of heroes to overcome the violence of tender emotions. Another defect lies in the tendency to distort and modernise national characteristics, as, for example, the attributing of love-gallantry to the most barbarous peoples, and French polish of manner. Crébillon and Racine are most at fault in this matter. Again in age, the French do not abide by probability in delineation, and make children act and speak as men. The "Britannicus" of Racine is much too wise for the age of fifteen years, and Joas, in "Athalie," exceeds still more the age of ten, attributed to him by Racine in defiance of sacred history, since, even if the phrases he utters could be culled from the scriptures, Joas applies them too well and too spontaneously for a child of that age. Calepio attacks also the Greeks, and his words have Vichian quality—"The Greeks did not observe very exactly those precepts; either it was a defect of adolescence in which poetry was at that time, or the rudeness of those people who loved to excess spectacles and especially tragedies. With regard to crime against the dignity of character the tenor of the whole century had some effect. The later doctrine of milieu governing literary creation finds here expression without logical development or elaboration. Then Italian tragedy errs in the majesty of tragic character as a result probably of too servile imitation of Greek examples." In one case very ancient subjects are represented which require simplicity, little consonant with modern habits, and a judicious infusion of modern greatness would be desirable to interest and move the audience without destroying the essence of ancient rites. It is difficult for the people to conceive a king without the conventional idea of majesty, and often unsuitable actions mar the dignity. Again, in dealing with historical subjects, the chief

characters must be drawn as in history or tradition without distortion or extravagance in one direction, in love for example. The French betray too great pre-occupation with "costume" or pictorial qualities of costume which, while being a notable ornament in dramatic poetry, occupies only a secondary place in perfect tragedy : the essence of tragedy lies in the quality of the action alone.

To obtain this quality of action care must be taken in the use of episode. Aristotle quotes epic as being most suitable for variety, tragedy for length of episode : but the real aim of tragedy is not delight with resemblance of many things as in epic, but with pity. And this pleasure is formed chiefly from the interest assumed, in conformity with nature, by the spectator in the misfortunes of the unfortunate. "Tragedy must be simple and free from long narration, which are not necessary to the action." Calepio condemns digression, and mentions chorus as being no longer practicable in modern tragedy, and even in ancient tragedy as only an episode. Some of the digressions in French tragedy have much grace and beauty without weakening the central action, in "Phèdre" for example, where Racine improves on the old play, and in "Britannicus," where the episodes perfect the plot, but they become artificial in "Horace." Dialogues as that of the Infanta in the "Cid," the explanations of *confidants*, incidents added to render more efficacious the unfolding of the plot, acceleration of digressions to reach the climax, are all condemned. The love-motive is especially catechised, and Calepio directly opposes St. Everemond, who defends it—"I cannot refrain from declaring beside the point, the opinion that love is a bond to unite heroes, since the real characters of tragedy are not heroes perfect in every virtue, but should have those defects which join them to the commonalty in human frailty." The French use love, not as the

main passion, but as an episodical: the superabundance of love may, however, be attributed to a national characteristic. The chief disadvantage accruing from love is that it makes the drama cold instead of keeping the spectator intent on the development of great evils on which tragic passions are based.

In artifice, in the art by which "the audience, held by illusion, learns with pleasure and ease the tragic representation through the action represented" *i.e.* disposition of affairs and incidents, introduction of the characters, dignity and propriety of colloquies, regulation of acts and scenes—the French are much superior to the Italians. The disposition of affairs lies in information regarding facts like the Greek prologue, in the development equivalent to their episodes and conclusion of that episode: Calepio objects to the Greek method of using one person or a god to describe the state of affairs, the epic narrations in the "Cid," "Rodogune" and "Pompée," and also the dialogue of Laonie and Timogene in "Rodogune," but the French show ability in hiding their intention from the audience. The continual use of confidants, the frequency of dreams, usually tedious, as a means of introducing the plot and explaining it must be condemned: the initial action should not be weakened by a second action, developed in the second act: by the Italians one action dominates, and every episode leads up to it, and the catastrophe must be a necessary and final development of the preceding action and arise from it, not from a casual event or series of events. The French err in proclaiming the catastrophe before it happens as in "Britannicus" and "Andromaque," in representing one section before the other. In Voltaire's "Oedipe," the dramatist, instead of surprising at one blow the audience with the massed effect of tragic events, as Sophocles did, makes Oedipus begin to know himself in the fourth act as the murderer of Laius. The catastrophe is the absolute culmination: the "Berenice" of Racine is most

defective in this respect. The French have three merits in introducing characters—of letting no actor appear on the stage without letting himself be known; of keeping the chief character on the stage the most of the time, so that the audience has an opportunity of penetrating into his emotions and interests, or at least leaving in his place character of equal dignity; of giving or making evident the reason for appearance on the stage. Calepio, however, condemns too swift transposition of time between scenes, lack of proportion in time between acts and the use of chorus to bridge over the acts. Thus, even while he praises the stage-technique of the French, the main body of his criticism is directed against them, and it is difficult for us to understand Emilio Bertana, when he states that Calepio glorifies French drama in the "Paragone," and proposes it as a model to Italians: Calepio's aim remains the construction of a national drama superior to that of the French pseudo-classicism, and he employs the detailed criticism of that drama with examination of the Greek to realise an indigenous dramatic ideal.

The theory of compassion and fear brings thus the whole work of tragedy to harmony in one function, and in this united conception, Calepio brings the construction of tragedy into a single ideal, unity of passion, even that unity practised later by Alfieri: but with this we find a conception of style in consonance with this single conception. Style has its essence in thoughts and words and varies with them, their finer development being also mirrored in the greater perfection and beauty of style. In contrast to rhetoric or oratorical invention, style in tragedy is more apt to move than to demonstrate—simplicity of style always, not "prolix verbosity, without body and often peculiar to familiar speech," not "too poetical forms," "use of Latinised expressions," "interruption of the flow of passions by improper poetical conceits," not prolongation of pompous speech without intensi-

fication of emotion. Calepio is not wholly in agreement with Martelli, who believes that the excellence of art lies in making itself known and distinct from nature through some trait; according to Calepio, all that is permitted to the poet is "to give to actions and passions those finer feelings which they can humanly receive, the office of the poet being to represent everything in the higher perfection." "Expression may be considered either as thought, which regards the useful, or as an idea which belongs to the pleasing. The former is really essential and contains either some truth or some test of truth: the latter is pure ornament, and comprises pompous similies and conceits." The French must be praised for the wealth and dignity of feeling, and the art of suiting them to the interests and enlivening them with the actions. But in Corneille especially, there is too great refinement of thoughts, and the empty displays of talent especially in passions ruin effect, so that, instead of perfecting nature, they destroy every trace of it. Figures peculiar to the epic and lyric must be avoided in tragedy. The ideal proposed by Calepio in drama, as in other varieties of poetry, is close connection between emotion and its expression—expression being the mirror of thought and of some truth at the same time. Calepio thus disallows any isolation of form and over-elaboration at the expense of simplicity and natural emotion, and brings drama into direct unity of expression even as unity of construction and unity of passion.

IV.

THE CRITICISM OF THE "PARAGONE" IN CON-
TEMPORARY WRITERS AND THE LETTER OF
CALEPIO TO MAFFEI ON THE SUBJECT AND
PRESENTATION OF TRAGEDY.

IV.

The *Paragone* had a favourable reception in Italy generally, but the Settecentescan love of literary disputes inspired another dispute, centering in Calepio's work, very similar to those inspired by the Orsi compilation and Muratori's "*Perfetta Poesia*" or Vico's argument with the "*Giornale de' letterati*." Antonio Conti, in the preface to his "*Prose e poesie*," welcomed the "*Paragone*" as being the most valuable contribution to the study of drama of his time, and promised to conform to the recommendations made by Calepio on the use of history. Calepio praised him for his fidelity to type in delineation of the Romans, unlike the French, who represented moderns masquerading on the stage in the guise of ancients. The consensus of critical opinion in the Settecento was undoubtedly that few if any could surpass Conti in the historical drama: Conti's own opinion contains a few notable observations, and may lead one to believe that Shakespeare had some influence on him, especially when "*Guilio Cæsar*" was written in London—"I do not claim to be legislator of the theatre, nor reformer of abuses; I only express my thoughts, which, perhaps, will never be put into practice, but to propose them they only need to be reasonable. Who can blame the poet who, seeing the men of his

century so greatly enamoured of Roman history, tries to adopt the means most easy and most delightful to make it more universal? There is another reason. The English love the tragedies of their kings, because they learn better from domestic than foreign subjects. We are all citizens of Italy; it is therefore natural to love the things which occurred in our country, and flatter ourselves at least with the memory of the greatness of their virtues and their empire, who dominated all the rest of the world then known." Conti refers undoubtedly to the historical plays of Shakespeare, which he may have seen acted in London in 1715 or 1718: certainly no other English plays refer so definitely to the English kings. Conti answers the criticism of Calepio, referring to unities of time and place and asides: in great and decisive actions all things are prepared, and preparation crowds accidents and changes them swiftly. The great art of Tragedy is to interest the audience so much that the watch is never consulted.

The most valuable criticism, generally favourable in tone, devoted to the "Paragone" is to be found in the "Osservazioni letterarie" of Scipione Maffei. Maffei goes even further than Calepio in his condemnation of rules, and his conception of the purgative function of tragedy has a peculiarly telling note—"It would be better perhaps to take a different path and be guided by another ideal. It would be better that he who judges poetry should have a poetical spirit to appreciate the beauties, fine shades and elegancies of nature and art, since otherwise, filled only with studied and scholastic rules, he would be often insensible to the most beautiful passages. Hence it is that wonderful passages, which charm every poet and move the multitude, are often condemned by critics from cold and unexpected reasons." The necessity for identity of emotion or spirit in poet or critic, in true constructive criticism, becomes here apparent even as we

have seen in Francesco Montani. The popular judgment discerns it more readily than obedience to superimposed abstract ideas. "If everyone, before undertaking a tragedy, began to meditate on the necessity for purging pity and fear, and the conditions which are imposed on the protagonist, and all the circumstances which govern the tragic plot, he would either do nothing or run the risk of doing miserably." The tone of the review strikes an absolutely modern note—"All that is said without offence to universal rules and those based on reason and nature." "There is not lacking in Italy those who consider that nature came before art, that fine works were not born from rules, but the rules were derived from the works, and that from the outcrop of books on poetic and oratory, a Homer, a Sophocles, a Demosthenes have never been seen." Maffei agrees with Calepio in condemnation of the French drama, and especially French verse, but he admits at once that French critics are not united in depreciating Italian literature. Some of the finer minds, on the contrary, have deprecated such condemnation, and the blind obedience to the dictates of single critics. In French drama "refinement and exaggerated imagery," which can only be excused in love-scenes where passion leads to extravagance, are much too common—"It is wonderful how those few Frenchmen, who have striven to discredit Italian poets by making us believe them full of 'punti' and 'frizzi' verbal arabesque and play on words, have not noticed that the passages in question never treat of grave and serious matters, but of love." "The chief defect of French poetry lies in the absence of a poetical language, which would have poetical form or something to differentiate it from prose." Readers of Chiabrera, Petrarca, and all others most excellent in poetical styles, will know suddenly that nothing could be imagined more different and more distant from poetry than this French poetry. Calepio is mistaken in believing that every

strange artificial form of expression is poetical when style can well be such, and yet not be poetical, and many passages in Corneille and Racine are equally bad in prose and poetry. Then Maffei descends to instance—"From not having used proper terms and the repetition of metaphors themselves, it follows that a scene is very rare where tempest is not used for adversity, abyss for oppression, thunderbolt for punishment, sacrifice for suffering, etc. And those are the authors who, according to many, must be studied to learn good poetry." "Tragic style must be greatly different from lyric, but it must not be forgotten that one is writing in verse, that one must not abandon the poetical language, nor the elegance of expression, nor the noble, non-plebeian ways of speech, nor the junction and division of verses." Calepio, on the other hand, seems to prefer rimed or measured prose. In this detail Calepio has evidently more modern views than Maffei, even if less pronounced in his condemnation of French style, and, again, Maffei's support of asides in drama classes him among the less advanced critics of the Settecento. But there is reason in one observation—"The basis of rules in truth and nature. Then it is true, or not true, that in a large theatre, a room, a square, persons are not found who speak together on one side and others on the other side without being heard across the theatre, room, or square? If this is fact, why should the poet not imitate the true? There is no need to raise difficulties through trifling rules, but consider only the most important and most essential of poetry."

Calepio's answer, a long letter contained in MSS. in the Archivio Calepio, Bergamo, is given now in the more important extracts, but a third criticism possesses symbolical if not intrinsic interest, inasmuch as it represents the last battle waged by the pedants and conservatives of the academies against this ever-growing flood of modernism sweeping the literary world—the

“ *Esame critico intorno a varie sentenze d’alcuni rinnomati scrittori di cose poetiche, ed in particolare dell’Autore del Paragone della Poesia Tragica d’Italia con quella di Francia* ” written by Guiseppe Salio, Secretary of the “ *Accademia de’ Ricovrati*,” in 1738. Salio begins with the conviction that the ancients attained perfection in everything, gives an anthology of extracts from the classics, especially from Plato and Homer, defends the latter against Tassoni, Muratori, Giraldi, criticises adversely the “ *Ragoine Poetica* ” and “ *Della Tragedia* ” of Gravina, where Aristotle has not received his due measure of reverence. In the eighth chapter some of Calepio’s views on ancient and modern tragedies are examined with the conclusion that his case for the moderns as superior to the ancients is not proven, especially since he judges with passion and has no conception of the true and perfect tragedy according to the examples and precepts of the Greeks, the first inventors and first masters. Then he wanders into a pedantic, absolutely scholastic definition of tragedy cut up into details in illogical succession, quoting among his tragedies Vergil’s “ *Aeneid* ” and in a dull, wearisome paraphrase of Aristotle confuses tragedy as understood in this revised narrow sense with epic, applying the theory of plot to both. He gathers together quotations from Vettori, Castiglione, without synthesis, without originality, without thought—a pedantic exhibition of undigested erudition, then, quoting the extract philosophy of the French, which reduces everything to its natural origins without depending on any opinion or authority and has been extended to every kind of literature, he attempts demonstration of how much dramatic art owed to the Greeks, who reached final perfection ; discusses various opinions of Calepio about probability, scenery, choice of subject, characterisation from this Greek criterion ; devotes a chapter to the chorus, fixed and mobile division of acts and scenes, modelling everything on

Aristotle. Tragedy is a continuous poem and, therefore, the unities must be strictly observed to make this continuity possible, and a continuous chorus should be admitted into drama of ancient and modern subject to realise this aim. Thus Salio betrays no knowledge whatever of the real nature of drama, but he has the distinction of being the most violent of the pedantic, academic school in the attack against the spirit of innovation which was rapidly destroying, not only the authority of Aristotle, but the recognition of dramatic superiority in the ancients, and weakening, as Calepio says, that "blind imitation of the ancients." Otherwise the compilation of Salio, being only a "gauzzabuglio" of the most unoriginal common-places of the century possesses no critical, historical, or esthetic value whatever.

Antonio Conti in the Preface to the "*Prose e Poesie*" and the "*Dissertazione sull'Atalia*" answered Salio, commenting on the illogical nature of the whole argument, since Salio always argued from the point that the rules of truth were those of Aristotle, which contained in many details and in the whole insufficient authority and imperfection. Salio had argued that the principle of the action was different from the principle of tragedy, using the comparison of a sculptor who, owing to a lack of marble to make the statue of a man, changed his mind and made a pillar instead. Conti considered this comparison utterly irrelevant—"The statue, only dependent on choice, on instruments, on material, on the art of the sculptor, has with regard to the action no obstacle or contrast as tragic action essentially has, since tragic action may be hindered and obstructed in its development." Again, to the observation of Salio, that "the wishing to do a thing and the preparing to do it is a different thing from actually beginning or doing it." Conti replied—"One cannot assign to human actions any metaphysically necessary principle whatever. There is no human action in which,

by reason of our liberty and the contingences of things which surround us, the reverse does imply contradiction, and there is no necessity for it to bear the same relation to effect as a figure carved in marble or an architectural detail to the rest of the statue or the palace." With this sufficiently original observation Conti brushes aside all geometric theory in art, and insists on absolute fidelity to human nature even if contradictory: drama represents human life and not an abstraction concocted of rules, and the dramatist must conform to the natural dictate and describe nature in action.

Calepio, however, treats Salio with much less respect as a fanatic, a blind worshipper of Greece, a servile spirit incapable of discerning the beauty of art, and especially dramatic art. If new beauties had not been added, if everyone had kept his head bowed to this yoke, then tragic art would still be in its infancy. Salio who entirely misunderstood and misrepresented Aristotle, cannot give a single example of the use of the continuous chorus in Latin drama, although the latter has been instanced by him. Again the chorus contributes nothing to the excitement of feeling. "Anyone with the slightest smattering of sense will know that improbability should be avoided by making the actors interested particularly in the actions of those in need of advice and compassion." Music, the music even of the chorus, has no part in poetic art: action does not suffer from being interrupted even if it is supposed to be continuous. The Greeks never avoided interruption, especially between the conclusion of the song of the chorus and its resumption further on: the fact that the chorus acted as intermezzo was enough to damn the entire unity of effect and ruin the distribution of time. Salio has not the faintest conception of the function of tragedy, and his distortion of the Aristotelian theory of the faulty hero into that of a hero with mediocre attainments makes dramatic characterisation

grotesque. Why should authority of any kind be recognised? "Poetry, which is one of the popular arts directed to the pleasure of the people and good regulation of manners, can only attain perfection through the production of effects suitable to it. Hence is it that tragedy, being in need of all the means which can make it useful and pleasing, should be adapted to the genius of the people for whom it is written: and since precision in philosophic reasoning is necessary to perfect the art of combining those useful and sweet elements necessary to the artistic intention, the knowledge of how to obtain the applause of the people is the fruit of this philosophy." Thus, in this detail at least, Calepio returns to the Gravinian theory, but Gravina does not place such stress on the consonance between artist and public in dramatic production. A further development of this depreciation of Greek drama, and a more definite attempt to penetrate to the reason of poetry, is to be seen in the letter to Scipione Maffei, and some passages at least have even now peculiar value for the discussion of the function and being of art.

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"The maxim of not taking for the standard in tragic rules, anything other than nature, is exactly what I praise and illustrate in the first two articles of my treatise (*i.e.* the "*Paragone*") where I suppose, without regard to any authority, the aim of tragical poetry.

"It is, indeed, my feeling that the most real and the most profitable thing in the university of the people, in favour of whom tragedies were instituted, is the correction of the excesses of passion by means of pity and fear: many instructions only suit peculiar conditions of people, but the provision of the regulation of passion is edifying to all. Having based on this reason my rule for assigning such a function as true and valuable to tragedy, the great

efficacy obtained with our humanity by the changes in fortune of him who falls through some weakness from happiness to misery, has moved me to approve of the affirmation of Aristotle as conforming to reason.

“Hence I hold worthy of reproof all those sophistries which, in the interpretation of ancient texts, led away from this doctrine. I would not hesitate to reject Aristotle if I could be persuaded that he had had the strange idea of determining as the principal aim of tragedy the purgation of minds of terror and pity as affirmed by some of his commentators. . . .

“The reason why the philosophy of Aristotle is neglected just now, and his poetic and rhetoric remain in favour in spite of that, is precisely because in treating the former, instead of examining nature in mathematical and experimental way, he alienated himself from it by following abstract ideas : but where he wrote concerning the latter arts he gathered his rules from the effects he saw produced in us by things prescribed in them. Apart from that it appears very pertinent the view that natural sciences regard hidden objects, and receive an infinity of arduous discoveries, the vestiges of which can only come to light after many vain efforts, and the development of many centuries : but the arts, which are restrained within certain limits where it is less difficult to discern each property, could well be perfected by the ancients in a greater or less degree. Among those which were reduced to greater degrees of perfection is architecture, which attained in the Romans such distinction that the labours of the other ages have added nothing to it : although some Frenchmen have been driven recently to discover a sixth order better than the five ancient. The Greeks gave the final touches to sculpture, which resembles poetry in imitation : and we cannot deny a similar merit to the oratory of Cicero’s time. On the contrary, I believe that the poetic art did not reach an equal standard among the Greeks or Latins :

for which a reason might be found in the greater utility of the other arts causing greater cultivation of them. If the system of the Roman republic had made the people of Rome as keen on tragedy as the people of Athens, I doubt not that the former, by improvement with the sequence of experiments joined to a greater refinement of taste, would not have attained greater majesty in manners and greater nobility in feeling. . . .

“I would also have repugnance in approving that passage in the ‘*Osservazioni letterarie*,’ where it says that fine compositions do not arise from rules, using this as an argument for no longer believing, according to poetics and oratory, a Homer, a Sophocles, and a Demosthenes—but, with reference to the poetic art, even if it is true that it derived from Homer the idea of the epic poem, and from Sophocles the better idea of tragedy, it appears to me that we cannot refuse to recognise how greatly both are far from perfect in the light of recent investigation into those arts. The poetry of Sophocles and Homer possesses all the value which a vivid and fertile imagination could give them : but art, availing itself of the knowledge gained by reason from examination of nature and the philosophy of manners, has chosen the good from the evil and opened the passage to regions beyond. In such a way, that even if it may have derived the form of the epic poem from Homer’s ‘*Iliad*,’ we can understand that the ‘*Iliad*,’ not only is not excellent, but on the contrary very defective in impropriety of subject, in undignified characterisation, in abuse of religion, in deviation from the moral direction, in improbable inventions, weakness of episode, and lack of balance in discourse. Considering those faults, there can be no doubt, that although Homer is unequalled for vastness and fecundity of genius, such faults, can not confer great benefit on art. In Vergil and some other poets of the last centuries, none, I believe, could really be termed excellent. Even Sophocles, although

under the direction of other ancients, he has left us the model of the finer tragedies, has, no one can deny, been surpassed in many things by the moderns, notably in the unfolding of events and surprises, in the representation of characters, in the painting of manners, in dignity of speech. But even if Homer and Sophocles were, without question, the best in everything, they would lend themselves badly to the idea of the perfect. Art alone discovers perfection, indicating the way to be followed to attain that perfection, and showing how far from such a goal are the limits reached by those two masters. Nor should it be argued that we cannot still progress, because they lacked strength to go forward. But, in discussing that art, I do not mean, of course, that which is contained in the writings of Aristotle and Horace. The latter derived their precepts from that, which they considered in the works of the first poets as unworthy of imitation and to be avoided: thus their arts remained defective in many artifices, and many improvements which were lacking to those poems; and beyond the reach of many opportune instructions to guard against error which they never had learned. Their art then, to bring us to knowledge of the perfect, should be increased by the observations of learned men by means of philosophy and criticism of later periods. I shall thus have a motive for assessing how great the error of Salio was in pretending fatuously that all perfection was to be found in the ancient poets and in the art of Aristotle, against all reason, and with authorities for such a fact of little value and inconclusive, although advanced with an air of great frankness and laced with a declamatory style. I would not accompany those who pay no heed to the ancients, but neither would I worship them as oracles. I am quite well pleased to accept the rules of the ancients, but will not veil those new gleams which the work of the moderns have added to them to perfect them." . . .

Calepio goes on to speak of tragedy proper, condemns asides in the middle of dialogue, soliloquies, in a company especially, since it is ridiculous for actors standing beside the speaker not to hear him also—"The reason is that, the entire strength of the action lies in the illusion in our fancy, that such a fictitious action is real in representation. When the senses, which have more power in us than imagination, shows us things inconsistent with those which are mirrored in it, we summon it from its illusion and pleasure ceases—this occurs when actors speak asides or stand beside those others whom they should not hear"—He quotes the "Merope" and "Orestes" of Rucellai, Euripides' "Medea" and "Orestes" and the "Electra" of Sophocles:—"Thus did Sophocles in the "Electra," where a lady of the Chorus, having seen Aegisthus from afar, pronounced almost in a whisper in Electra's ear some verses, although he has not yet reached the view of the audience. Euripides also, in order that Orestes may not be disturbed and awakened by the chorus which speaks with Electra not far from his bed, represents the Chorus as speaking in a voice not unlike a hiss. When tragic actors must treat things of profound secrecy, I would prefer the poet to arrange such matters in such a way that the place make those things unnecessary. . . . Neither can we put any evidence in the statement, that it is inconsistent with truth to imagine persons speaking in a room or square, from one part to another, without being understood by all. A fiction, not improbable in poetry of a narrative type, becomes so in the representative. . . . For the same reason I consider inexcusable those remarks passed by an actor while discussing with others. A poet can describe quite legitimately the inner emotions which a person experiences in presence of others: but it appears too strange that the same person speaking should listen, and should not listen to the person who is speaking to them.

“Since tragedy should be in verse, it should undoubtedly be composed in those methods of speech which belong to verse; for common speech, almost abject and unbecoming the dignity of tragic style, instead of creating an admiration consonant with the metre would make it fall into disfavour. But the speech of tragic actors would not be natural, would not possess the probability necessary to him who treats important matters and leads to grave passions if it appeared garnished with poetical ornaments: tragedy would be made ridiculous, just like a grave matron who, forgetting her own propriety, would strive to imitate the charms and ape the seductions of a light woman: the perfections of tragic eloquence lies in a certain moderation admitting only those forms demanded by the nature of the verse and the greatness of the subject, and this is so difficult that many writers of great repute have exceeded this measure, partly through not having known thoroughly the value of such moderation, partly through not having entire accuracy in practising it. In my opinion, tragedy should have the actual words of poets, the meanings usurped by poetry alone from others, and the grammatical figures used in it, both in the change of particular sounds, and in the composition of phrases. The audience, when it conceived verse as a feature of tragic speech, learns without repugnance those elements in metrical language. On the contrary, common turns of speech would deprive dramatic speeches of their sustained effect, and show bad correspondence with the metre. The most common error lies in the use of other poetical ornaments, which are other figures constituting poetical oration. Poetry was the inventress of figurative speech, and the first mistress from whom the same orators learned it as noted already by some ancient writers. But, as the art of oratory did not adopt all the licence of poets, but, choosing those ornaments and those graces which could bring persuasion in the end, left to them that which was invented

through sheer pomp and for pleasure alone, desirous of not depriving the oration of probability, so I believe that in tragedy we must cast aside many poetical phrases, and especially in violent passionate scenes. The speeches of the latter lose all probability if they do not appear natural and spontaneous. One of the imperfections which Euripides and Sophocles found in the tragedies of Aeschylus, was the affectation of ennobling and ornamenting speech with all kinds of poetical colours : but, since the use of their times gave neither reason, but desired harmony in the speech of the actors, and in that of the chorus, it happened that the latter, *i.e.* Aeschylus, struck out verses suitable for the song, and believed himself justified in rising above common speech. This in my opinion was an enormous mistake : for it was not probable that an interlocutor prosecuting a discourse with an equal or greater passion should abandon natural forms of speech to adopt studied and artificial. It can, however, be attributed more to the century than to the poets who used it. Many err, however, in believing, without noticing the diversity of their verses, that they are allowed to assume in modern tragedies, what they read in the Greeks."

Calepio then quotes examples of ornate diction in the "Ajax" and the "Antigone" and attacks Domenico Lazzarini's translation of the "Electra" for faults such as this :—when Sophocles wrote that the clear light of the sun inspires the morning song of birds, Lazzarini says "agli augeletti move le orientali manifeste voce" ! and then proceeds :—

"Although I find in some tragedies of Seneca an emphasis, an energy, and a majesty, which have a singular value, nevertheless, in the plays which pass under his name, we recognise the poet masked beyond moderation, beneath the figures of his characters. Even if some remarks can be noted of great intensity and aptness,

many, however, appear to be constructed more to retail epigrams than express living passions. If what I said until now of tragic elocution is really considered, it will be evident that I prefer in tragedy, not merely a measured prose, but a kind of speech which will have that poetical grace to which discourse may lend itself without offending nature" . . . Calepio discusses the metre suitable for tragedy, quotes Noris and Maffei's "*Osservazioni letterarie*," and examines the translation of the "*Iliad*" into hendecasyllables published in the latter . . . "It seems too contrary to nature the theory that, verses of seven syllables irregularly combined with hendecasyllables should make us feel a more notable consonance than continuous hendecasyllables. Consonance is born from a certain regularity in sound: and there is no doubt, that if short verses are interposed for a long space in the unchangeable order practised in "*canzoni*," there will be formed from such a continual resemblance some sound of "*canzoni*": but with the variety of their mingling praised by me, a great part of that sensible harmony ceases which is produced from likeness of sound, and a metre is formed closely related to the iambus. Yet it is desirable that, according to the changing discussions, one sort and now the other sort of those verses should be preferred without any limitation conformed to the various degrees of passion graded therein; and we believe that the iambic verse was used in tragedies just because it dropped easily into familiar discourse . . . The sciences do not permit us to follow any other guide than the natural impulse, but the arts depend considerably on the genius of those who first invented them" . . . He quotes Le Bossu and Castelvetro on the use of the hexameter which, if not admitted into tragedy, was employed by Theocritus and Virgil in pastoral dialogues.

"The first reason for these (*i.e.* the pastorals) was, I believe, that the bucolic was in its origin a song instituted for the games played by the people who had fled from the

plague to the country to turn away the wrath of the gods; and this was cultivated so much that its professors were famous throughout Italy. The choice of hexameters was not unreasonable since, singing in this fashion, the gods were praised and the singers celebrated themselves in the guise of heroes. Without admitting, as Dionsyus of Halicarnassus narrates, a love of the pastoral life in ancient times among the nobility, the nobility of the heroic verse did not weaken the simplicity of that life. The other reason was, that Theocritus, after having imitated successfully in hexameters such songs used, such verses as most closely resembling the speech of shepherds, and Bion and Moschus and also Vergil and Calpurnius did not believe themselves justified in composing their eclogues in other verses, although they were not written to be sung”

Discussing the use of the love-motive in French tragedy, Calepio says—“ Explaining myself more clearly, I say that to one type belong those plays in which are represented grievous events which result from the passion of love; to another type belong those which I condemn, in the first place as being founded on amorous intrigues. The former are most worthy because, even if the action depends on love, the misfortunes derived from it raise in the audience pity and fear, and from them is born the correction of the love-passion in conformity with the function I ascribe to tragedy. But in the case which I suppose, and as example of which I mention the “*Arianne*” of Thomas Corneille, there is total deviation from the aim of the tragic plot: hence it was natural that, reproving the French for the loves introduced by them into tragedy, I was told that they introduce them usually as episodes, and do not choose them as principal subject, which would certainly be still more serious error, similiar to that of Corneille in the above play. The “*Berenice*” of Racine, although it conforms more truly to the nature of tragedy

in the anguished moments of a strong love depicted there, wanders also, if we consider it, from its real aim: the compassion which arises from it, instead of disposing the audience to abhor the violence of love, interests it in favour of love and makes it detest the reason of state which tyrannises over minds, while fear, which would engender caution, is lacking.

“I observe that in another part of the ‘*Osservazioni letterarie*’ you should find it strange that I accuse French dramatists of employing too poetical locutions, and deny that the passages quoted by me are in any way poetical...” (He then combats the too-precipitate conclusion that the French, having no poetical language cannot write poetry.) “But most surprising to me is the observation that anyone could suspect poetic style, when I merely noted that the ordinary language of French tragedies is a perfect tissue of abstractions, pompousities and tropes so frequent in French writers as properties of poetry. It is said also that, whoever has a sense of real poetry and has read Chiabrera, Petrarca, and all the others most excellent in the various poetic styles, will recognise at once that nothing could be more unlike them than the abstractions, pomposities and tropes of the Frenchman...”

“I would consider it a waste of time to say that poetic style being the imagining frequently of virtues, vices, and even accidental attributes as active persons, it does not follow that we should declare the French language to be deprived entirely of poetic forms, even if the bitter Frenchman may have abused them more than once. But I cannot let pass without comment the proposition in which it is admitted that some passages quoted by me could be poetical in image, but not in style nor in words... We cannot, and will not, doubt that concepts as well as images are not part of a style: because, as all the ancient masters of eloquence prescribe the use of phrases and figures, which constitutes each mode of expression, it

is everything which is formed by the essence of ornaments composing several styles taken from some and from others." (He quotes Longinus, Pallavicino in his "Treatise on style," Scaliger and Boccaccio in his "Commentary on Dante.") "I do not understand how we can separate phrases, images, and other figures of speech, which under the word style should comprise, not alone the usual sense of the word, but also the proposition of declaring void of every poetic quality the tragic diction of the French. A very extraordinary sense must be attached to style, when we separate from it the condition of words where words are added to style as a distinct thing."

A second letter follows in answer to Maffei :—

"I have only now to reply to the resolution given by Sig. Maffei to some assertions I made with reference to asides or communications to the audience, namely, that they were understood everywhere, and more especially by those on the stage. Concerning this he says in his defence in the annotations that that is confusion of the true and fictitious, inattention to the fact that the spectators are in Venice and the actors in Greece or Egypt. But this is a reply beside the point. So much is it false to distinguish in drama this linking of the true with the fictitious, that dramatic art lies precisely in the adaption of the fictitious in represented action to the real presence of the audience, which is obtained by transporting their imagination into the scene of the play itself, and keeping it there intent. Without this we would not see produced in them that interest which is so intense sometimes as to move them to tears. Every incident must be considered as a defect which interrupts the distraction of him who is present at theatrical representations, and awakens conception of that illusion for which he conceived passion."

Calepio speaks as a modern in every part of this letter, and his theory of art as being superior to either philosophy or science, since it leads to regions beyond philosophy and science, and only known to a vivid and fertile imagination destroys at once the identity of philosophy and poetry affirmed by Muratori and Gravina. In common with the finer minds of his time he recognises gladly the poetical greatness of Homer, the world-genius, who gave life to the epic, but his admiration will not blind him to the fact, that if we admit that poetry reached perfection in the Greeks, poetry and art itself can be no longer realities, since the life of everything ceases with transformation and development. It would be a perfectly hopeless theory, this of the perfection attained by the ancients. Poetry must be understood in a different fashion from finite and abstract artistic productions like sculpture and architecture. Calepio hints at the Vichian division of knowledge into knowledge of the abstract, mathematics and knowledge of man, only to be understood in a different way and in different ideals. Architecture and poetry present the same differences as mathematics and humanity, the social being of man. Poetry being an intimate part of the human spirit, more intimate than either sculpture or architecture, cannot be perfect in any man, in any age, but develops along with the spirit. From this standpoint we must consider the theory of Calepio, that the moderns have developed poetry towards greater perfection inasmuch as civilisation and life have progressed. Pier Jacopo Martelli expresses the same thought in his "Tragedia antica e moderna" and Francesco Montani di Pesaro gives concrete affirmation—"I desire and seek that the spirit of the ancients inspire me, but I have no overweening pleasure in using them. . . . A definite truth should not be less worthy of honour in our mouth, than in the mouth of any ancient author of renown. . . . Live in the ancient fashion, think and write in the modern." Muratori attributes the

superiority of the moderns to a profounder, more philosophical insight into the spirit, into the inner beauty—"I do not venture to affirm that the ancient Greek and Latin poets, either because the love so greatly celebrated by them in verse had as aim the superficial part of the beautiful, the body, or because they did not penetrate into such material, used only the amatory and musical genius in treating this emotion, and only touched the surface. But our Italians, thanks to the philosophical genius, discovered the very marrow of such a passion, and derived from it a thousand truths and delightful charming images, to be sought in vain in the poetry of the ancients." In this description of the love-poetry of Petrarca, Muratori thus attributes to Italians an inner knowledge of beauty apart from eternal harmony and proportion: the plastic ideal has been abandoned in favour of a spiritual. Those quotations are sufficient to show that Calepio expresses very clearly in this letter a theory held by practically all critics of the Settecento. Settescan criticism reacted against the French, then against the classics, and preached a national literature and a national criterion: Calepio represents more fully than any other the union of those elements into a synthetic criticism. He shows also originality in the thought that social and national interests with the Greeks led them to cultivate one art to the exclusion or neglect of other arts, thus bringing poetry not merely into close contact with the individual but with the whole nation. Poetry has been separated entirely from the natural sciences, and in this separation alone we can see how far the geometric conception of poetry held by Gravina has been set aside by a more spontaneous, more direct criticism. The moral element remains even in Calepio, but it has been raised into criticism, and not quoted as an eternal ideal used for aims extrinsic to the nature of poetry: the advance is evident since this close identity of the moral element, and poetry with exclusion

of philosophy and the natural sciences must lead to a pure theory of art as art, of poetry as poetry, of criticism as criticism. Art has been narrowed and intensified at the same time : art alone discovers perfection, and there is no reason to believe that the ancients attained to that perfection sought by art, or that the perfection they did reach is identical to the perfection of art. If that were so, then there would be no reason for art now, since perfection means finality, end of development, and brings with it death, since nothing can be added further, and the expression of art, after the attainment of this perfection, would be absolutely futile. Calepio assigns an important function to criticism in this search after the perfect, since through criticism only can results be co-ordinated and graded into one conception, one criterion. His most original thought, however, lies in the instinctive adaptation of form to content, as the use of the hexameter in the bucolics of Theocritus, Bion, etc., where the hexameter was really an attempt to mirror the speech of shepherds ; again in his conception of verse in drama the same close identity of form and content is expressed.

V.

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF BODMER AND
CALEPIO IN THE ARCHIVIO CALEPIO,
BERGAMO.

V.

DONATI has given in full detail the history of the relations between Bodmer and Calepio, and there is now no necessity to recapitulate. In the Civic Library at Zürich are contained the letters which passed between them during 1725-1761, and also a copy of Muratori's "*Perfetta Poesia*" annotated by Bodmer. On those letters and on the "*Briefwechsel*" Donati founded his study, but, in a note, he states that the Biblioteca Civica in Bergamo was being reorganised when he visited that town, and that he was unable to consult the Calepian Archives for any further correspondence they might contain. The Calepian Archives have now been examined and reclassified by Professor Locatelli, the librarian, and the following letters brought to light. In themselves they must constitute one of the most important contributions to our knowledge not only of Bodmer and the Swiss but of the literary relations between Italy and Germany of the early Settecento. They add no important details to the narration of Donati; the latter's description of Bodmer's stay in Italy, his education, his travels, his acquaintance with Muralt, and through him with the Bergamascan Count, cannot be superseded. Yet it is possible to explain that relationship from a different standpoint than that of Donati. Donati explains it as a series of fortunate accidents which culminated in a literary friendship similar to that of

Goethe and Schiller but, geographically, Bergamo was in close contact with Switzerland and Germany, and any great movement in Italy found an avenue into Switzerland through that beautiful town situated at the end of the great valleys of Brembana, Seriana and Lecco. Thus we find Bergamo established as a liason town between Italy and Switzerland, and prosperous just as much with the work of Swiss firms as with Italian. Intercourse between Lugano and Bergamo on the one hand and Switzerland on the other became frequent, and an essential part of trade.

The Calepian family had acquired great possessions round Bergamo, and with the Serassi, the Tiraboschi, formed that peculiar aristocracy of which the Bergamascans were devoted admirers. In a sense, Bergamo still remains self-centred, independent, proud, and keeps those old names which lent it prestige during the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. It is justified in doing so, for the Calepios, the Serassis, etc., loved intensely their town and devoted themselves whole-heartedly to its affairs, so much so indeed that the history of the province depends almost wholly on the correspondence and other papers of those families for detail regarding life, custom, and trade. They numbered in their members literary men of a distinguished type, not litterati by profession but by love, who recorded every detail, philological, historical, geographical, archæological, they found, and strove to keep in the forefront of the culture of their time. Calepio belonged absolutely to this class, and his activities were devoted to this ideal. Hence among his papers we find a lengthy examination of Roman antiquities around Bergamo, "lapide" which even now would repay examination for the light they could throw on the Roman occupation of Northern Italy. This essay was the cause of a dispute with Maffei, mention of which occurs in one of the following letters. With this notice must be taken of a study devoted to Italian orthography very comprehensive and very

detailed, a first attempt to establish Italian dialect on a scientific basis; of a criticism, almost as scientific, of *Susanna*, a tragedy written by Pietro Serassi in 1722. Although based on the academic model, this criticism has also the merit of being constructive: from minute evaluation of detail, Calepio strives to penetrate to the inner meaning and emotional value of the play. There are poems, fragments of poems, and a tragedy written by Calepio himself in "versi sciolti" probably in support of the theories promulgated in the "Paragone." Apart from the Bodmer correspondence there are letters from the most famous litterati of his time, from Antonio Conti, who praised the "Paragone" in the preface to his "Prose e Poesie," from Muratori and from Mazzoleni.

With regard to the Swiss, one letter from Calepio to Breitinger, dated 15th April, 1734, is of importance inasmuch as it shews that Breitinger also was influenced. In it Calepio thanks Breitinger for the book on Greek inscriptions commented by D. Bovier, and states that he has received at the same time a letter from Bodmer who asked Breitinger to send this book. Calepio appends a criticism of considerable length on the book itself. From 25th January, 1737, to 14th March, 1749, extends a series of business letters from and to Corrado Crelli. Business was carried on with the active participation of Bodmer to whom Calepio sent often the list of books required, almost always philosophical, including Wolf's complete works. The Crelli family had had intimate connection with Italian litterati, and one member of that family, Gian Gaspare degli Crelli, in his "*Beiträge Zur Geschichte der italienischen Poesie*," Zürich, 1810, gave the first romantic history of Italian literature.

Of the following letters the first is the most important since in it can be found a parallel for many thoughts in the "*Hamburgische Dramaturgie*" and such a comparison should complete the work of Oskar Walzel who confined his attention

to the "Paragone" alone. The others give a close insight into the literary studies of Bodmer and Calepio especially with regard to Milton and Klopstock.

Calepio to Bodmer.

Lo sostanza di ciò che dite in primo luogo si è che la compassione ed il terrore non sieno, come io suppongo, gli unici mezzi che abbia la tragedia per purgar le passioni ed adducere per prova potersi avere il medesimo intento per mezzo del sublime il quale, come che abbia vostri significati, qui si piglia per la grandezza delle azioni e de' caratteri delle persone di gran virtù che si muovono secondo il vostro avviso ad informarci quanto possiamo a sì degni esemplari quindi conchiuderle che la pietà e lo spavento ed il sublime sono tre vie differenti che conducono ad un fine : ed aggiungete inoltre che questa ultima non è tanto discosta dell'altre, che insieme tutti non procedano come accade nel Catone dell' Addison.

Parmi che si debba imprendere da più intrinseci principii la considerazione della tragica poesia. Le azioni teatrali quantunque si dividessero in tragiche e comiche ebbero nondimeno un fin comune prima di recreare poi col perfezionarsi dell'arte correggere piacevolmente il popolo che s'adunava a udirle perchè però tutta la poesia debba considerarsi una disciplina popolare ; la Tragedia e la commedia hanno principalmente fra l'altre specie questo nativo attributo. Quindi è che il giovamento delle tragiche rappresentazioni quantunque diverso da quello delle comiche non del però secondo tale istituzione essere meno comune al popolo ascoltatore. Il frutto che deriva dalli Eroici esemplari da noi proposti non è certamente d'una natura atta a riceversi dal più della gente. Pochissimi son quelli che veggendo certe grandi virtù facciano come voi dite ogni sforzo per incitarle il meglio ; che per loro puote. Alle virtù si sale per gradi il

primo de'quali è purgarsi da difetti in cui s'incorre per l'umana fragilità : in questa purgazione si segue per l'aspetto de' grandi Eroi. Le virtù pui singolari siccome rapiscono l'ammirazione di tutti così mettono in disperazione d'imitarle il più degli uomini. Io paragono l'effetto di certi grandi caratteri a questo di coloro che dotati dalla natura di forze straordinarie di corpo fanno per le città pubbliche prove. Accorre ognuno a vederli, ognuno con *piacere* gli ammira : contuttociò nen rado sarebbe chi s'avvisasse per essere parimenti composto di carne ed ossa di tentar cose somiglianti : peroche'consccii gli spettatori del propria valore stimano quelli esseri quante piu degni di meraviglia tanto superiore alla imitazione.

Io voglio supporre che ciascuno procacci di seguir l'esempio de'proposti Eroi. Che ne avverrà egli però? Le azioni di que'Grandi saran'elleno proporzionati all condizione della comune cittadinanza che costituisce gli spettatori proprii della tragedia? Le proprietà d'un gran Re, d'un gran politico, d'un gran capitano son convenevoli a pochi. Anzi certe virtù che resero illustri alcuni personaggi si disdirebbero ad altri che volessero imitarle. Certo ordine che lodasi in Alessandro magno si biasimerabbe in un Generale d'altro esercito ; e dagli austeri sentimenti, che per particolari circostanze distinsero Catone sarebbe più agevole che altri ne traesse senni d'una sciocca ostinazione che d'una pregevol costanza senza che non dubito punto che la Tragedia sopra del soggetto composta dell'Addison non accresca agli Inglesi la dannevole facilità d'uccider se stessi ; sicche ciò che fu in Catone effeto d'una generosa costanza divenga in essi fomento di vile disperazione. Che si per muover più meraviglia s'innalsino i caratteri a gradi piùttosto fantastici che umani come si vede in più Tragedie francesi, lascio a voi pensare quali stravaganze dovrebbero produrre.

Poiche dunque l'utile del proposto sublime esser non puote universale come conviene alla istituzione di Tragici spettacoli :

deesi conchiudere che egli non sia il proprio come è questo del purgare colla compassione e col terrore non tanto per l'arbitrio de primi poeti quanto per la natura di tal poesia.

Ora per mostrarvi in qual guisa segua questa purgazione e come essa sia assai generale comincerò a dire che siccome non è fine della tragedia l'indurne a grandi imprese ed a grandi-virtù ; cose neppure il purgare delle grandi passioni e di grandi vizi come alcuni credono suo essenziale oggetto e correggere i falli d'ogni più comune passione li quali occorrono facilmente al più degli uomini che si debbono credere generalmente fragili ed incontinenti, non malvaggi interamente. Asserii però che li protagonisti perfetti o fossero di virtù mezzane o d'eroiche dovevano avere non un vizio ove un'abituale malvagità, che ne sarebbe compatibile ne giovarebbe col castigo alla maggior parte ; ma una colpa che lo renda insieme meritevole di punizione e non odioso per troppo grave pravità. Si potrebbe al più tollerare in essi alcun'abito vizioso qualor hanno il contrapponimento di sublime virtù che compensando il male li rendano amabili. Se vizi enormi si correggono dalla Tragedia per accidente quando per esempio si fa succedere la morte d'un Tiranno : ma del castigo giova più per consolare ed appagare il popolo che per correzione. Quindi potete scorgere come il giovamento del terrore e della compassione sia generale per ogni sorta di persone acciocchè tutte essendo incorse o facili ad incorrere ne difetti che veggon puniti in altri, ancorche segnalati ricevon motivo di guardarsene meglio.

Piacemi qui d'avvertire che non solamente il sublime da voi accentto non è un mezzo che conduca sicuramente ad un fine comunemente giovevole come il terrore, e la pietà, ma che questi due stessi effetti non sono propriamente due vie che, separate l'un dall'altra, guidino ad una medesima metà.

La pietà sola non giova punto, tuttoche rapisca assai l'uditore come anche nellie tragedie in cui muoion gli innocenti quando la lor morte non sia una conseguenza dipendente da

castigo di persona principale: per lo contrario ove patiscono coloro che non son liberi da qualche fallo la compassione aggiunge forza al terrore par l'interesse ch'essa cagiorne e quindi la tragedi acquista la sua vera efficacia. Ciò che può dirsi della sublimità d'caratteri si è che quantunque non sieno essenziali giovano nondimeno ad aumentare la tragica impressione; io giusto contro il parere d'Aristotele stimo già proprii li Protagonisti di gran virtù che quelli di mediocre, purchè non sieno del tutto innocenti conciosiacchè parendo alla gente più degni di scusa muovono maggiore compassione, essendo più facile, che il castigo avvenga al più del popolo posciachè non ne van 'liberi i più singolari. Benche'dunque la sublimità de' caratteri possa assai conferire alla tragedia affimar non saprei che il Catone dell'Addison sortisca pienamente il suo effetto o riguardasi il terrore o la pietà. Il prima è inutile perchè muore un innocente e rispetto alla seconda quanto il merito della persona e la grandezza della calamità 'vagliano a commuoverla, tanto la reprime l'intrepidezza del suo animo, perciocchè non desta perfettamente l'altui dolore chi non lo mostra. Gli affetti di chi ascolta corrispondono a quelli di chi ragiona: però nel libro dell' Autore disse Tullio che le passioni le quali si voglion eccitare ne' Giudici convien che sieno prima impresse nel dicitore: ed Orazio nella poetica disse che le sciagure di Telesio e di Selio non avrebbon prodotto nell'uditore il convenevole effetto. Nulladimeno s' io paragone il Catone dell'Addison col Catone di M. Deschams, truovo per vero appresso l'Inglese maggior artifizio nel render compassionevole la calamità di sì grand'uomo che appresso il francese Imperciocchè guegli nel dar maggior luogo all'esercizio della sua sostanza lascia meglio apparire il peso delle sciagure.

Mi rimane ora a rispondere ad una apposizione che si trova fatta ad una della mie proposizioni. Voi siete d'avviso che altri possa dire che la regola di distribuir con giustizia le pene, e le ricompense non abbia fondamento ne nella natura,

ne nella ragione, ne nella poetica degli antichi, che al bene ed al male soggiacciono indistintamente tutti gli uomini si buono che colui e che si i Teologi come i Filosofi di ciascuna religione abbiano in ogni tempo rese sufficienti ragioni di questo ordine, della divina provvidenza e che quindi dedurre si possa che li poeti non debbon trattar la persone se non nel modo che son trattate nel mondo ove la virtù talor si vede accompagnata da felicità talora de miserie e perciò doversi mettere per alcuni protagonisti si gl'innocenti come gli altri secondo la qualità delle favole elette. Questa massima ha due inconvenienti: primo confonde la condizion della storia colla natura della poesia: secondariamente distrugge la virtù purgativa di Tragici affetti e concio toglie alla poesia medesima una notabil' parte dell'indirizzo morale in cui consiste il suo pregio più degno. Fra l'arte poetica e la storica ha questa differenza che una propriamente istruisce del vero, l'altra guida per mezzo delle favole al buono: quella espone la verità naturale, questa induce artificialmente al vero morale che tanto e più nobile quanto i metodi son più pregevoli purgati e lavorati per umano beneficio che, quali nascono nelle montagne pero non deve tante la poesia pinger le vicende degli uomini nella forma in cui succedono quanto nella maniera in cui possono avvenire giovevolmente. Essendo dunque ufficio del poeta l'istruzione orale egli dee a tutto potere procacciarla secondo la natura de'poemi che prende a comporre. Che qui sarebbe il dire che sapendosi esser sottoposto alle medesime sciagure chi degno non ne appare come chi le merita esse non s'apprendono per un castigo e non sieno però correzione. L'ignoranza de'motivi per cui talora la divina provvidenza affligge i giusti non distrugge la cognizione di questo retto ordine che vuole punita la colpa e premiata la virtù. Laonde qualunque fiata a falli succedon le pene si presumon castighe senza chè il popolo coll'esercizio di simili spettacoli avvezzano la fantasia ad aborire chi che trova, se more congiunto

co' successivi patimenti, si rende naturalmente inclinato al bene. Chi si le peripezio hanno nelle azioni tragiche dipendenza immediata dalle delinquenza, la forza della correzione diviene anche maggiore: però negli esempi sopra recati più purga la morte d'Antigone che la morte d'Ercole. Quanta alla pratica de' primi poeti chiaro si scorge per li successi testè addotti e per altri citati nel mio paragone che hanno esse riconosciuto e pregiato questa Tragica correzione: e quantunque per la gran' copia delle azioni che presero a rappresentare scegliassero altre sorti di soggetti di cui qual più qual meno si scostava della perfezione, non deesse però dedurre che le regole da me spiegate sieno meno ragionevoli e meno perfette. Queste cose che ma hanno dato notizie di esporvi in proposito delle scritte riflessioni metteranno in chiaro ciò che non ho bene espresso nella mia critica operetta ed appagheranno forse anche voi.

22nd July, 1731.

Calepio to Bodmer.

Sciolte siccome io m'avviso le prime opposizioni che secondo lo spirito de Francesi già mi faceste risponderò parimente a quella cho ritrovo nell'ultima vostra benchè possa appena rubare il tempo ad importanti occupazioni che mi son sopraggiunte. Consiste essa in dire che l'idea de mali sofferti da protagonisti i quali quantunque caduti in qualche fallo sono per altro giusti deve occupare gli uditori assai più che il pensiero della colpa punita; perocchè il popolo di sua natura inchinato a perdonare quelle reità, che non son offensive delle comuni inchinazioni ed all'incontro fissa l'animo nella grandezza delle calamità che loro avvengono. Diti però potersi trare in conseguenza che il frutto della Tragedia sarebbe più tosto il disporre la gente a spaventarsi d'ogni pericolo ed a lamentarsi sopramodo delle disgrazie che a riflettere utilmente al castigo

de' mancamenti. Laonde la Tragica purgazione sarebbe un rimedio simile a quelle medicine che ricando qualche giovamento ad una parte del corpo nucono all'altre e forse maggiormente che non giovano a quella : ed allegate che tale effetto potrebbesi attribuire all'Antigone et ad altre favole somiglienti.

La sostanza del predetto ragionamento non è punto nuova ma derivata da Platone il quale ne 'dialoghi della Repubblica diede bando ad ogni poesia che consista in imitazione e nel cui particolarmente eschiuse del buon governo la Tragedia siccome quella che fomenti le passioni e massimamente il talento di piagnere. A questo filosofo rispondendo già il nostro Castelvetro asserì che il popolo s'accostuma colla frequenza di casi compassionevoli e terribili a non essere misericordioso ne pauroso come accade a coloro che nelle calamità pestilenziose o nelle guerre crudeli si commuovono bense nel principio, ma poichè veggono per vive centinaia e migliaia di persone si rassicurano e si rendono costanti. Ma questo critico colle sue importune sottigliezze invece di abbollire la sentenza di Platone annulla scioccamente l'oggetto vero della tragedia volendo che essa abbia per fine di liberare gl'animi da quelle stesse passioni che deve tanto più muovere quanto è più perfetta. La risposta che secondo me dee darsi al greco legislatore è che non erasi da primo proposta per le tragedie alcuna regola direttrice di buoni costumi ne quelle de suoi coetanei chi da lui non considerate avevano acquistato circa tale proprietà quel credito che i successori riflettendo poscia sopra di esse ebbero delle migliori considerandole con la norma di quelle leggi che riguardano non meno l'utile che il piacere. Abbiamo di ciò manifesta pruova dal vedere, che Socrate, introdotto a discorrere da Platone confondendo la Tragedia col poema epico, non nomina che Omero come Tragico ed il migliore de Tragici quasi che la Tragedia non avesse scopo diverso da quello dell' Iliade o dell' Odisseo. Certamente sopra tale supposto era ragionevole il Socratico discorso consociosichè pervertendo Omero il decoro

indusse gli Eroi a piagnere vilmente ed a lacerarsi per disperazione i capelli ed invece rappresentarli esemplari d costanza e di grandi altre virtù come richiedeva la qualità de' suoi poemi li fece aiti a nodrire nel popolo le passioni. Simili inconvenienti non possono nascere della Tragedia che verso con decoro intorno il suo soggetto considerata secondo quella epoca di perfezione che ne' miei precedenti discorsi lo descrivo.

Che le sciagure che in essa succedono producono alcun effetto pregiudiziale alla prerogativa che essa ha di purgare da ciascuna sorta di reità il popolo, col perdonare a meschini quelle colpe chè non l'offendono non perde già la cognizione di que 'debiti che ha ciascuno per le leggi della natura e della propria religione e della ragione che debbon rendere i malfattori alla divina giustizia : quindi e chè quanto le pene occupano gli animi degli uditori, tanto più però accrescono il rimorso in coloro che si sentono di simili trascorsi ed in chi n'è libero l'avvertenza di schifarli. E qui torna in acconcio il considerare chè il timore, cagionato dalla gravità di Tragici mali reputati come castighi, non ha propriamente alcuna vita ne suppone punto alla vera forza ; anzi è principio di quella sapienza che è madre di tutte le morali virtù ciò che potrebbe in certa maniera nuocere alla gente sarebbe l'indurre i Tragici personaggi a dar contrasegni d'una cieca e vile disperazione ad animarsi contro il cielo a querellarsi delle divine disposizioni ; ma queste azioni sarebbero altresì contrarie alla qualità da me stabilite del principale attore della Tragedia il quale dee riconoscere il suo fallo e rassegnarsi ai superni voleri. Che se disse altrove esser neccassario chè chi patisce si dolga per eccitare l'altrui dolore non vuolsi intendere eh'egli abbia col lagnarsi e col piagnere a mostrare animo fievole ed abietto. Avvi il modo d'unire il dolore con saggi di magnanimità proporzionata al decoro de' caratteri. L'arte maggiore del poeta consiste appunto in regolare in guisa i trasporti della natura col freno della ragione, che gli affetti ora per lo contrasta delle virtù ora per la loro violenza si cattivino

il comune compatimento. Non posso a tale proposito non biasimare più scrittori i quali hanno censurato l'Ifigenia d'Euripide di disuguaglianza di costume: perciocchè prima ella appare timida della morte poscia intrepida nel incontrarla. Ascrivono essi a difetto ciò che dee lodarsi per un' arte del poeta il quale ben lungi dal commettere un fallo osserva un'ottima verisimiglianza, lascia al primo avviso della morte comparire in essa i premi moti della natura ed accrebbe quindi la compassione verso l'infelice fanciulla con rappresentare che faccia forza a se stessa per superare i naturali commovimenti: questo è quel sublime che nella mia lettera precedente ho lodato e che perfezionerebbe anche questa Tragedia d'Euripide se Ifigenia non fosse innocente. Adesso ripigliamo il fil del nostra discorso per isgombari ogni difficoltà che potrebbe rimanere.

S'affirma che l'Antigone di Sofocle piuttosto sgomenti per la tirannia di Creonte che non giove per la punizione di quella principessa tanto più che da molti sarebbe assai scusata e da più altri sarebbe creduta degna di lode anzichè di castigo. E esso non rimane concio provato l'assunto nella vostra lettera proposto. Non neghero che nell'Antigone non offenda la tirannia di Creonte ma di circostanze le quali furono da me riprese nel mio Paragone vuolsi pero riflettere che questo difetto non è piu della massima generale dell' arte, ma dell'azione particolare la quale non è capace di tutte le buone circostanze, così nelle matematiche se le figure non corrispondono alle dimostrazioni non è mancanza della scienza ma della materia non esatta. Parimente se, come considerate intorno la medesima Tragedia, la colpa d'Antigone si può credere un'effetto di costanza, lo sconcio non è della tragica dottrina secondo la quale ho detto a suo luogo che il protagonista deve patire per notevole trascorso ma del fallo che soggiace a tale equivoco: e che s'aggiunga che ove s'abbiano sicuri principi di buona morale a cui il poeta dee

avere riguardo non possono nascere simili inconvenienti. Cio che ho detto dell'Antigone potrebbesi agevolmente rispondere anche rispettivamente a qualche difetto che vi avvenisse in altre ancorchè regolari. . . Conchiudo dunque che qualora la sublimità da noi proposta può giovare al fin tragico da me spiegato coll'aumentare la commozione delle passioni è molto de' gradi lodi: ma che quando s'assegna alla Tragedia principalmente come oggetto di puro piacere o come puro esempio di costanza o di somiglianti virtù considerando io che per li caratteri troppo feroci o troppo stoici frastuono sovente la compassione ed il terrore invece di conferire al vantaggio d'avvalorer l'una e l'altro, non saprei certo determiner l'animo mio a suo favore: e crederei anzi che invece di dare buona riforma alla tragedia si distruggerebbe la sua primaria proprietà e si frastuonerebbe il suo vero effetto.

BERGAMO, 22nd July, 1731.

Calepio to Bodmer.

Il Sigr. Argelati quantunque intento alle grand'opere degli scrittori d'Italia lavora intorno una delle colezioni di tutti gli scritti del Ligurio che più non son stati insieme pubblicati. Questa sarà in cinque o sei tomi per molte osservazioni che saranno aggiunte da più dotti: il primo è già terminato: contuttociò (niuna) ora proposta ora scritta perchè vuole tutti gli altri. Il Marchese Maffei mi disse una ingiusta toccante lo studio delle lapide.

BERGAMO, 7th Sept., 1732.

Ora poichè nella vostra ultima comunicandomi la notizia delle favole Esopiche che il Sigr. Muralt è per dare alla luce bramate ch'io dica alcuna cosa circa tale generi di poesia, io me prendero che antipongo questa sorta di componimenti a molte altre per l'utile morale che in questi più necessariamente e più direttamente si propone il poeta: però non posso se non

lodare il genio de Francesi che in questi ultimi tempi purchè distintamente abbiano ornato medesimi, essendodi veduti li poeti l'uno appresso l'altro, cioè La Fontaine che ha la precedenza non più di tempo ma del merito ancora almeno per l'utile di La Motte e Richer. Certo e contuttociò che io son d'avviso differente da quanto ha lasciato scritto M. de la Motte il quale in una della sue favole mostra di prendere giovamento pari a quello dell'Iliade e confonde una specie di favole con l'altra: anche nel ragionamento che scrisse il preambolo alle medisime. L'instituzione degli umani costumi dee sopra ogni altra aver luogo in Poesia; siccome apunta nella pittura le favole istoriate vincon di pregio quelli che rappresentano animali paesi o altre cose, a questa secondo il mio parere non si posson pareggiare le favole Esopiche ne per lo diletto ne per la sentenza.

Il diletto in cui è maggiore la passione viene delle circostanze che debbono s'accorger nella rappresentazione delle nostri azioni per renderla verisimile si per la maggiore interessa che ci cagiona la concezione della umanità; e l'istruzione riesce più artificiosa per l'ostentazione del fallo, che ha il poeta; gli esempi son più proporzionati ed efficaci in cui l'intenzione del poeta rimane nascosta, ladove nelle favole ove s'introducono gli animali appare sempre certa aria di documento, non potendo essi esistere si non comme allegorie di qualche peccato. Mi par dunque che si trascorra troppo da tanto chi esalta e pregio de le favole esopiche quanto quello della epopeia ove dipingono le gesta degli eroi. In tutta la sua attinenza essa non solamente è la piu nobile ed essengial parte della poesia; ma per l'universalità sua propria comprende tutti gli ordini del mondo naturale e civile. Le altre specie della poetica invenzione tanto sono più digni quanto piu ad essa s'accostano o consistono di quella universale sapienza che è l'oggetto del poema epico e la tragedia. Però non dobbiamo punto ci proporre le favole esopiche come parte di quelle opere che dagli antichi abbrac-

ciansi sotto nome d'epiche, ed a molte che vengono sotto nome di liriche ed alla stessa sat'ra. Perciocchè quantunque da questa ultima si porra l'intrusione dell'utile per la correzione de'costumi, non è questo in generale come il punto che si può trarre dalle favole esopiche per cui si può comporre un più compiuto modo di darlo. Io stimo degni di lode i Francesi che hanno lavorato sopra tale disegno così credo che molti Italiani che si sono procacciati dall'applauso con poesie amorose, lo meriterebbero assai maggiore se si possono esercitarsi in simile studio. Certo abbia l'Italia un bell'ingegno per ciò fare da ciò che si scrissero di questi componimenti in latine e massimamente de Gabriele Fucino nel quale apparmi risalto il gusto di Fedro.

BERGAMO, 11th June, 1732.

Calepio to Bodmer.

Quindi e che doppiamente caro mi è stato il saggio da voi mandatomi del Messia: perciocchè oltre il godimento che par se medesimo mi ha ricato è stato altresì motivo a cui di rompere meco il lungo silenzio. Ora accennando alle particolarità del nuovo Alemanno poema dicovi che per la espisizione che mi avete fatto gustare io comprendo essere l'autore uomo assai proprio per porsi in gara con Milton mostrando una fantasia idonea per le sottili invenzioni e habili di que'lumi che possono dare visione alle espressioni e passando in quel ma aviglioso che distingue i poeti grandi dalli mediocri d'unica cosa che potrebbe pregiudicare alquanto all'autore si è l'elezione del soggetto, il quale come che sia il più sublime che si possa ritrovarsi, non pare che lasci al poeta quella libertà che gli conviene per arricchire il poema di cui che richiede. Fu già scritto da qualche ottimo autore dell'arte poetica che convenisse prendere le azioni de'poemi più da istorie passate che da recenti, poichè essendo troppo note le circostanze

di queste ultime non si permettono quelle alterazioni e que' rinfacciamenti che fanno l'essenza e l'ornamento della poesia. All'incontro le antiche di cui non sono noti li particolari al popolo, per cui la poesia è fatta un'arte popolare, lasciano luogo ai poetici di poter trattarle e cavarle par lo spazio vasto del verisimile senza offenders il volgo ignaro della stessa verità de'fatti. Ciò che sia detto delle storie mondano può con maggiore forza dirsi del Vangelo, il quale comunque sublime già è si noto anche nei passi più minuti che meno di quelle lascia luogo alle invenzioni; non si possa porre in esse la mano senz'alcuna alterazione ne senza offesa al sacramento umano in cui è impresa ogni parola. Tale riflesso mi ha fatto dubitare che il nuovo poema soggiuse a qualche imperfezione per quanto riguarda l'essere il più nobile ed il più grande che possa proporsi.

Da che lessò in Venezia il Giornale de letterati d'Italia si prese a pubblicare alcuni novelle letterarie nelle quali veramente si para encora di alcuni libri oltramontani: ma poichè non si stampa si non con foglio, inoltre si costituisce di dare poco più de' titoli. Io non so però se via sia modo di farsi il saggio da voi speditomi, il quale richiede due o tre fogli. Contuttociò io non lasciero di procurarlo e quando mi riesca di ritrovarlo prenderè qualche ora alla mie occupazioni per tradurlo.

Al dubbio nuto sopra il Morganti del Pulci dico che se si considera quello nel numero de 'poemi o di romanzi sui, non può certamente se non parere assai noioso e pieno di discorsi ma par ben riconoscere il suo valore comico pesarlo con altra bilancia. Il Gravina nota benissimo che l'intento del Pulci fu di ridurre in beffa tutte le invenzioni Romanzesche laonde conveniva conchiudere che secondo questa idea non si debbono biasimare in esso ciò che altrove sarebbe intollerabile ma sono pregi dell'opera gl'inverisimili e le singolarità.

BERGAMO: *without date, probably written about 1740.*

Calepio to Bodmer.

In a letter addressed to Bodmer, 7th September 1761, Calepio says: "Ho Intesso che si stampa da un anno o due in Berna un giornale in lingua italiana intitolato estratto della letteratura Europea. Avrei caro di sapere che concetto abbia questa opera, della quale sinadora non ho veduta alcun tomo." He mentions a second edition of the "Paragone" to be published in Venice, and for which he is preparing "giunte."

Bodmer to Calepio.

Monsieur,

J'apprens par la votre du 10. du mois passé que vous que vous avez reçu les feuilles de la Biblioth de Fabr. J'ai fait ce mon mieux pour m'acquitter de l'autre semblable commission. Le libraire me dit, que vous ferez bien de vous adresser à Celui qui vous a vendu le livre, que les libraires sont obligés de suppléer les livres qu'ils vendent, et qu'ils peuvent recourir aux Imprimeurs ou Editeurs. Cependant il m'a promis de faire toute diligence à la foire prochaine de francfort pour vous contenter. Il faudra attendre ce qu'il en fera. Je me félicite sur l'achèvement de l'examen de la poésie tragique, après lequel je soupire depuis si longtemps. Mais afin que ma satisfaction soit entière, je vous supplie de me permettre la lecture de cet ouvrage, qui ne peut être rempli que de rares connaissances et de nouvelles lumières. J'espère qu'à présent vous aurez surmonté la peine de mettre vos écrits au net. Je me souviens d'avoir lu votre lettre sur l'orthographe italienne et d'en avoir admiré la difficulté et la délicatesse des auteurs. Au reste je souhaiterais d'avoir assez d'ascendant sur vous Monsieur pour vous persuader de publier votre dissertation; je suis peut-être plus que personne en état de vous bruire pour cet Effet, ayant à ma portée une bonne Imprimerie qui dépend de moi. J'attends sur cela vos ordres. Si vous entres dans mes

pensées ce sera moi qui corrigerai les Epreuves. Le 5 tome de la Biblioth. Italique est sorti, et le 6 va paraître. La dispute de Voltaire et de la Motte roule sur les deux thèses de ce dernier, et que la rime est une puerilité. Leurs écrits ne sont pas encore parvenu jusqu'à moi. Voltaire a écrit une nouvelle tragédie sur la Mort de Brutus, qui fait parler tout le Monde. Je ferai toute diligence pour la procurer. Si vous voulez y reprendre le dessein de la continuation du théâtre Italien, vous n'avez qu'à commander, mon dit Imprimeur est a Votre disposition. Je vous en dirais d'avantage, mais j'ai des occupations qui me pressent et qui me forcent de finir.

ZURIC, le 20 jan., 1731.

J'ose vous prier Monsieur de me dire de la comédie de Monsieur C. Marquis Maffei qui porte pour titre *Le Ceremonie* se vende séparément.

Bodmer to Calepio.

Monsieur,

J'ai été charmé d'apprendre par Monsieur Gaspar Crelli mon neveu, que vous vous êtes souvenu quelque fois de moi avec votre bonté ordinaire. Je croyais manquer à mon devoir essentiel si je tâcherais de contribuer quelque chose de ma part pour vous entretenir dans cette disposition, ne fut ce que par une conviction solennelle que je suis toujours le plus dévoué de vos serviteurs et de vos prosélytes, c'est à dire de vos prosélytes dans l'art de la tragédie, et à cette occasion il faut que je vous apprene, Monsieur, que vous en avez bon nombre en Allemagne particulièrement à Leipzig, et à Hambourg, que votre brave, et solide traité de *Paragone* vous a gagnés, quoique vous leur soyez toujours anonyme, et qu'ils attribuent cet ouvrage à je ne sais quel Comte du Fini, a Leipzig, on vous a même traduit en Allemand, et vous êtes près d'être produit au grand jour par l'imprimeur. En France

on vous lit aussi avec plaisir et on vous goûte fort mais "exemple des Corneilles empêche, qu' on ne vous suive. Je ne sais ce que votre nation en croit, le chevalier Argelati en a écrit à Monsieur Crelli et compagnie libraires en termes aussi froids que méprisants Salio vous a attaqué avec plus de hauteur et de rancune que de solidité. Il serait fâcheux que votre nation réglât son jugement sur celui de ces gens là. Oserais-je vous demander, Monsieur, si depuis rien n'est sorti de votre judicieuse plume dans ce genre? En échange je vous dirai de mes nouvelles, quoique elles ne meritent guère votre curiosité. J'ai publié une defense du *Paradis perdu* contre Voltaire et Magne, où je tâche d'expliquer au mieux que je puis l'art de lier le merveilleux au vraisemblable. J'ai travaillé encore avec Monsieur Breitinger à un art poétique, dont les règles se tablent sur la nature de l'homme, et sur la disposition aux impressions, que les objets font naturellement sur leur esprit d'une certaine manière. Je souhaiterais de la soumettre a votre jugement, mais par malheur elle est écrite en Allemand. Je viens de parcourir le Newtonianisme pour les Drames par Algerotti. Cet auteur est de tous vos compatriotes, je crois le premier, qui s'est dégourdi de mille prejudices populaires sans se revêtir du caractère des Anglais et des Français, dont il a pris la solidité chez les premiers, et la délicatesse chez les seconds. On l'a traduit en Français mais assez superficiellement. Il est fort estimé parmi ces deux nations. Je reviens enfin au principal sujet de cette lettre, qui est de m'assurer de vos bonnes grâces, et de vous dire en somme, Monsieur, que je suis et serai toujours avec une estime parfaite et un sincere devouement, etc.

BODMER.

ZURIC, ce 19 novembre, 1739.

Bodmer to Calepio.

Monsieur le Comte mon Maître et tres honoré Patron.

La continuation de votre précieuse amitié me flatte infiniment, je suis au désespoir de ce que je me sens incapable de vous prouver en aucune façon que je n'en suis pas tout à fait indigne. C'est un malheur pour moi que je ne puis pas Monsieur vous rendre conte de mes études, qui sont entièrement tournés vers la littérature allemande. Je viens de publier en cette langue un poème Epique en 12 chants dont le sujet est Noé sauvé dans le Déluge universel. Quoique le matière paraisse stérile, je me suis assez bien gardé de ne pas m'écarter de mon sujet. L'année passée j'ai publié *Jacob et Rachel*, petit poème qui roule entièrement sur l'amour patriarchal de ces deux personnes du premier âge du Monde. Toutes mes peines pour retrouver le petit dramme du Conte de Lemène Giacobbo al Fonte furent perdues. Je le tiendrais pour un grand bonheur si je pouvais en avoir seulement l'usage pour quelques jours.

Je voudrais que vous puissiez lire mes poèmes; je risquerais votre censure, Monsieur, mais je gagnerais toujours par la justesse de vos Avis.

Je vous suis infiniment obligé, Monsieur le Comte, pour la peine que vous avez pris avec Monsieur Quadrio. Peu des mois apres ma dernière j'ai vu l'ouvrage de ce Scavant, je lui trouvai une exactitude mechanique, lourdes minucies, une érudition empruntée et certaine timidité qui n'ose pas s'écarter du chemin battu. Aisement on prendrait cela pour un marque d'esprit philosophique. Cela a fait que je jettrai l'ouvrage et que je suis son auteur en oubli. Je ne trouve point d'avantage d'être loué par un auteur qui lui-meme demeure obscur. M. Clopstoc auteur de la *Messiadé* vint me rendre visite l'an 1750, il fit un séjour de 9 mois dans notre ville. La réputation de son poème est établie en Allemagne.

Les français le trouvent un peu phantastique. Il est à Copenhagen, le roi de Danemarc l'a pris à la cour et lui paye une bonne pension.

Un autre jeune homme vint de publier un poème sur la nature des choses. Il prononce en poète philosophique que l'univers a toute la perfection possible. Il suit les traces de Leibniz et de Platon mais sans qu'il se rende leur esclave. Il est fâcheux que nous sommes inintelligibles aux nations au delà des montagnes.

Je viens de lire les Argonautiens d'Appollonius Rhodius, je lui trouve plus de grandes beautés et de poésie que Longin ne semble lui accorder. Je souhaiterais d'en savoir votre sentiment. Salvini ne l'a-t-il pas traduit, et la traduction n'est-elle pas imprimée? Il dit dans une lettre à Lazarini *ch'egli ha tradotto in verso sciolto i poeti greci Eroici.*

ZÜRICH, le 17 du mai, 1752.

Bodmer to Calepio.

In a business letter dated Zurich, 26th April, 1752, Bodmer writes :

“ Il paradiso racquistato del C. Lavini n'est pas apparemment autre chose qu'une traduction du paradis recouvré de Milton, poème morale et didactique.”

Monsieur le Comte, mon illustre Ami.

Quand je vous envoiai les poésies de Haller je n'eus riens moins que l'intention de vous faire de la peine avec certains passages que je savais trop bien être contraires aux décisions de Rome. Quiconque de l'Eglise romaine ne peut pas envisager sans être effrayé dans les auteurs des protestans les traits fondés sur leur religion et leur morale, ne doit jamais les ouvrir. Ainsi je vois avec plaisir que les sentiments de

Haller auxquels vous trouvez à redire ne vous ont pas empêché de lui rendre justice sur le général de la poésie. Je suis fort intrigué de donner part de vos objections à l'auteur. Je m'abstiens même d'y repliquer quoique ce soit, pour ne pas tomber moi-même en contradiction avec vous. Et quel moyen de traiter la controverse avec fruit s'il n'est pas permis de consulter les auteurs du parti contraire qui ont écrit ex professo sur la matière qui font l'objet de la controverse ! Celles qui vous paraissent sujets à caution dans Haller ont été si bien éclaircies par nos auteurs, qu'à moi, qui les ai lus, aussi bien que ceux qui tiennent pour l'église Romaine, il ne reste la moindre difficulté. J'ai même peine à croire que tout homme qui les méditerait avec liberté et pouvoir entière de la Raison n'en fût pas convaincu. Mais pour ne pas s'égarer dans cette discussion il faudrait la commencer aux principes les plus universels et les plus incontestables, et je crains que cela-même nous menerait dans une mer de difficultés. Et quoi ! Est il merveille que les docteurs de Rome et de Genève ne prétendent guère en matière de Religion, eux qui ont des opinions contraires sur les droits de la nature, des discussions même sur les points de physique et de mécanique ! par exemple sur les antipodes, sur le mouvement de la terre, sur la pluralité des mondes. Les meilleurs livres tant de philosophie que de théologie des anglais, des Germains et même des français sont inconnus en Italie. En Germanie, en Angleterre, en France-même chaque petit prêtre, chaque homme de qualité a sa bibliothèque rempli de bons livres. La vérité ne se tient pas cachée dans son puits. Chacun est à même d'examiner par soi-même et avec une liberté, qu'il n'a pas à se reprocher pour un crime, la route qui peut le mener le plus droit et le plus sûr à la félicité éternelle.

J'apprens avec beaucoup de plaisir la résolution que vous avez prise, Monsieur, de reimprimer *il paragone* avec des éditions si importantes. Dieu veuille écarter bientôt les soins qui mettent un obstacle à l'exécution de ce dessein. La traduction

en allemand ne fut pas exécutée, on a seulement donné le précis des préceptes qui y sont contenus, avec quelques observations. Je pourrais vous donner, Monsieur, bon nombre de nouvelles concernant mes productions poétiques, si la langue germanique dans laquelle elles sont écrites en vous les rendait fort inutiles. Que vous servirait-il si je vous disais que j'ai publié le *Noah* en 12 chants, le *deluge* en 5, la *Colombona* en cinq autres. Les sujets seuls donnent une juste prévention contre ces poèmes et quel moyen de la dissiper ! Si ma conscience poétique ne m'attirait pas, je n'aurais pas eu la hardiesse de vous décrire les *Noms des Heros* que j'ai traités. Le sujet de *Noah* est le même que celui du *deluge*, mais traité sur un plan très différent. Il peut venir un temps où l'on me traduira, mais ce métier de traducteur est une ambition qui me fait douter s'il est trop de souhaiter que l'on soit traduit. Depuis quelque temps l'Allemagne fut enrichie de plusieurs poèmes qui ont la mine de durer. Un jeune homme de mes amis du cercle de Souabe, qui est actuellement dans ma maison a écrit sous mes yeux neuf lettres des morts aux vivants de leurs amis ; de plus, *Abraham* mis à l'épreuve en 4 chants. Ces poèmes comme les miens sont écrits en Hexamètres, car notre langue ayant des dactyles et des spondées admet le vers des Grecs. Et puisque la langue italienne a ces pieds, ne serait-elle pas aussi bien susceptible de vers Hexamètres ? Si mes orielles tedesques ne me trompent pas ces quatre vers sont des Hexamètres assez coulans :

Quel poledro che sciolto intorno al campo Sanese
Presso la madre amica col crine incolta fuggiva,
Vedilo la per la carriera pisana coll'unghie
Batter il suolo per arricher da foglie cî Lauro
Suo padrone . . .

La bonne opinion, que nous avons du génie poétique des Italiens, nous impose de tenir une telle pensée. On m'a

apporte un de ces soirs *La Redenzione* poema di Santini ; ah combien il est au-dessous du *Paradis perdu* de Milton, par rapport au Genie, à l'invention, aux caractères, aux sentiments ! Je ne dis rien des passages qui sont le fruit des dogmes particuliers de Rome, je pardonne à toute poème la mythologie de sa nation. Au lieu d'en être chaque, je m'étonne seulement quand je lis :

Sa potenza d'un Dio ch'e vostre figlio
 La misura fiera del poter vostro
 Più promota aita avrassi nel periglio
 Tutor al nome di donna che al nostro

C'est le
 Sauveur qui
 parle à la
 chère.

Sacra il comperlo delle tante pene
 Far a vostro voler un Dio demente
 Non quel heroe, ma Donna, che ritiene
 In cui, che prega, il braccio onnipotente.

Quelle idée faut-il avoir de la toute-puissance, de la justice, de la bonté éternelle pour accorder tout cela ?

Si vous avez vu *il paradiso raquistato* del conti Lavini, dites-moi, Monsieur ; je vous supplie ce que vous en jugez afin que je ne coure pas le risque d'acheter sur un beau titre de bombast. J'ai vu *il mondo nuovo del Aigliani* mais c'est un radoteur grobianesque. Nous avons depuis peu *La Basiliade* ouvrage pretieux de l'auteur de l'esprit des lois. Ce sont des livres que je souhaiterais qu'ils fassent plus universellement connus et lus dans vos contrées.

ZURIC, ce 22 de sept., 1753.

VI.

THE VALUE OF THE BODMER-CALEPIO
CORRESPONDENCE IN THE STUDY OF GERMAN
CRITICISM AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH
LITERATURE IN ITALY.

VI.

IN the "Paragone," Calepio placed rather less importance on the subject of tragic purgation than on the criticism of French drama: he desired to combat French pseudo-classicism while employing examination of the French drama and dramatic criticism to establish and consolidate an individual theory. In this he was following the example of Pier Jacopo Martelli who tried to combine the excellencies of both dramas, Greek and French, into a new type of a national tendency and national signification, of Scipione Maffei who in the "Merope" obtained a great measure of success in this combination but was unable to preserve full consistency in his characterisation, in "Merope" especially, where contradictory motive and contradictory action ruined the dramatic effect of the heroine. Calepio, in his letter to Maffei, attributed this inconsistency and contradiction to ignorance of a dominating motive in dramatic construction and psychology and gave as dominating motive the moulding and grouping of psychological situation to form a single impression on the mind of the spectator, this impression being purgation of the emotions aroused in tragedy through pity and fear. It is even now difficult to define exactly what Calepio meant by this correction: there are emotions of pity and fear in

us, elements in our psychology, which may be summoned forth either singly, consecutively or together; tragedy summons both forth simultaneously in order to purify the mind itself of such emotions, to effect in short psychological transformation. Yet, such a transformation can have no *raison d'être* in itself since it cannot displace those elemental emotions, and make it impossible for us to experience either pity or fear, or both pity and fear again: tragic purgation has momentarily fused those emotions into a single emotion, even passion, but there is no reason why this transformation or fusion should take place if it has no value. What value then can be given to it which may give it tragic efficacy on the one hand and psychological necessity on the other? What justification can the poet have in aiming at such an effort? This problem has been a stumbling-block to all commentators of the Aristotelian catharsis. Stephen Odon Haupt, discussing the various interpretations advanced since Lessing, dismisses the ethic, *i.e.* the Calopian and Lessingian, the hedonistic, *i.e.* the Renaissance and Gravinian, the therapeutic, and ends with supporting the intellectual. In the words of Aristotle, a feeling of pleasure always accompanies this clarifying function—"Peripetie and recognition are based on the wonderful. Learning and wonder of oneself are mostly pleasant. For in the latter there is the desire to learn, so that the wonderful is something to be desired." The hedonistic and ethical factors are bound up with the Aristotelian catharsis, and even Haupt cannot avoid them: "In tragedy the spectator recognises in his partner either himself or one very close to him, and rejoices, even when his partner suffers, in spite of the fear he experiences, because he knows it to be unreal and comforts himself with the thought that such things would not happen to him in reality or will happen. It is the same gruesome joy which we feel in a nightmare, where we know, in

spite of the vividness of the dream, that we are dreaming. It is the basis of the special delight we have in pieces like Grillparzer's 'Traum, ein Leben.' " Calepio does find in this tragic effect a certain pleasurable emotion, but he cannot see in this pleasure any justification for a psychological change as caused by tragedy, and refuses to consider such a doctrine of pleasure as at all worthy of drama, either tragedy or comedy. The only real value he can find is ethical, but the ethical is always repellent in itself without some pleasure to make it palatable. In this letter he lays more weight on this ethical function than in the "Paragone," and appears in some respects to have retracted from the position taken up in the "Paragone" in order to conform more closely to the didactics of Bodmer. But we cannot see in this any weakness in the ultimate value of his criticism, which lies not in any theory of tragic catharsis or tragic pleasure, but in the desire to bring tragedy within a criterion of psychological, inner, spiritual values, and make it a definitely constructive factor of the spirit, not only of the dramatist but also of the spectator.

This last consideration gives peculiar meaning to his refutation of the theory advanced by Bodmer, that the sublime should be the aim and function of tragedy: tragedy would thus be a description of heroic actions, an expression of heroic passions and emotions, and the spectator, beholding such emotions, such actions in the utmost perfection and utmost power granted to humans, would strive to model his thoughts and emotions on them. Admission of such a theory would destroy at once all identity of actor and spectator, would remove tragedy at once from the human spirit and even intelligence, and place it in an impossible and unattainable empyrean far removed from humanity and absolutely outside of experience. Psychology, ethics, criticism of any kind would in reality be powerless to explain or make such a

tragedy in any way real. Thus Calepio remains on a more modern, more indisputably right level than Bodmer, and cannot, therefore, admit admiration into appreciation and criticism of drama. Refutation of the Bodmerian hero and heroic action leads Calepio to define what, in its ultimate signification, is nothing more nor less than the "Bürgerliche Tragödie." The pleasure and edification of tragedy should not be less intimate with the listening people than comedy, and comedy and tragedy, in this aspect at least, are of equal value. Both, in common with all poetry, should be held as a popular discipline. Even in this Calepio advances beyond his contemporaries: the classical discrimination between tragedy and comedy thus tends to disappear before a broad definition of poetry. The benefit to be derived from heroic examples has no meaning for the majority of people: the doctrine of inculcation of virtue by means of perfect examples may excite admiration, but at best it remains only a council of despair, not only in the dramatist, but in the spectator as well. The only conclusion to be drawn then is that the dramatist should represent people of similar nature, and doing similar actions to those of the audience itself. Will the actions of those great heroes be proportioned to the condition of the common populace who constitute the real spectators of tragedy? Calepio touches on that great difficulty which was solved ultimately by the creation of the domestic or middle-class tragedy; he makes the necessity for it very plain, and defines in broad terms the lines to be followed in such a tragedy, and uses the "Cato" of Addison to emphasise what he desires. Again, it is utterly impossible, even if we accepted the doctrine of limits in tragedy, the delineation of the perfect type, the ultra-heroic, to decide which hero, in history or out of history, would satisfy a perfect criterion. The qualities of a great king, great statesman, great captain can be found in extremely few, and great kings,

statesmen, or captains are not cast in the same mould: certain imperious characteristics to be noticed in Alexander the Great would be ridiculous in another captain or king. The emotions awakened in the audience by such examples may be dangerous as in "Cato" where the example tends to encourage suicide. Actions, characters, emotions are not a constant but vary eternally, infinitely, unreasonably: one cannot submit them to any rule other than one purely intrinsic, intrinsic to the human psychology, human spirit itself. The Goethian esthetic-intellectual explanation of the function of tragedy as joy at the completion and perfecting of a work of art deprives tragedy of its inner element, and substitutes for it intensive self-appreciation without really affecting the spirit and emotion: joy at completion and perfection remains at best, not an element in the spirit or of the spirit, but on the spirit, and while it avoids those variable factors mentioned above, even as the ethic explanation of Calaneo and Lessing, it cannot either ennoble and intensify our conception of and feeling towards tragedy or open our spirit to that other spirit pulsating through and active in tragedy. It is necessary to discern this deeper thought, subtler intention in Calaneo, to gauge exactly the importance of his theory; otherwise the finer points may be omitted and a mere paraphrase of Aristotle be seen in the mature thought of a critic working through drama as represented by Greece and France and on nature to a final criterion. Tragedy must rest absolutely on characterisation, dramatic psychology, and the art of the dramatist must lie in so describing the emotions and thoughts of a character as to show entire consistency to a natural impulse and to a tragic, even when action and emotion do not develop directly towards the tragic aim. Calaneo instances the "Iphigenia" of Euripides as a supreme example of this elastic and yet perfectly dramatic character-delineation.

The influence of Calaneo on Lessing has been affirmed

by some critics and denied by others. Oskar Walzel expresses the just point of view—"It has been affirmed, with reason, that Lessing was the first to discover in Aristotle's "*Poetics*" the essential laws of dramatic art, laws which, before him in Germany, were deformed and weakened by the interpretations and arbitrary limitations of the French. If this opinion is true, one should not forget that man who, before Lessing, has essayed a correct application of the Aristotle principles, and has succeeded in exposing the usurpations of French criticism with a criterion practically the same as the interpretation given by Lessing. Not that others, Dacier and Dubos, had not noticed the discrepancy between the views of Corneille and Aristotle. But no one beyond Calepio was able with energy, equal to that of Lessing, to destroy in detail, through the Aristotelian poetics, the French theory." The "*Paragone*" was published in German in 1746 as "*Critische Briefe, Auszüge aus Herrn Graf von Calepios Abhandlung von der Tragödie*" (Zürich), and it is quite possible that Lessing knew this translation or the "*Briefwechsel*" with Bodmer. It is fundamentally a matter of little importance, but such a parallel in the criticism of two writers of different countries, and the acclamation with which the work of one was heralded, and the comparatively little notice the other received, only go to prove that the new criticism welcomed by Germany, and triumphantly represented as such, had already become almost a commonplace in Italy. The development of dramatic criticism in Italy from Gregorie Caloprese onwards had been on the Lessingian lines, closer interpretation of Aristotle and rejection of the French interpretation: every dramatic critic gave his own definition of catharsis, and collocation of their ideas would fill those divisions in interpretation suggested by Haupt as of equal value, and the only possible outcome was exactly the "*Paragone*" of Calepio. It is impossible to

avoid this conclusion: modern dramatic criticism did not begin with Lessing, but with Pallavicino almost, who, in his preface to "*Ermenegildo*," gave a direct interpretation of Aristotle, with Pier Jacopo Martelli, Antonio Conti, Maffei, and Calepio. We can find parallels to many of their most fundamental ideas in modern writers. A writer in a newspaper, speaking of the "*Fedora*" of Sardou and criticising the acting of the heroine, expresses a theory which might well have been taken from Conti himself, if the writer had ever heard of such a person—"And in this way her sufferings would rise in a crescendo until her terror in the last climax would take us unawares and win us by its surprise." The psychological drama suggested by Lessing had already been carefully outlined by the Bergamascan nobleman, and put into practice before him by Martelli, Conti, Maffei, and after him by Gozzi and Alfieri.

In an essay on the sublime in tragedy, appended to the "*Briefwechsel von der Natur des poetischen Geschmacks*," Bodmer has undoubtedly founded his entire theory on the "*Paragone*" and the letters with Calepio: Bodmer in a letter to Gottsched (sub finem 1732) admits the influence himself—"You can only counteract operas with tragedies of the most perfect kind. You might have gained an idea of what I consider a perfect tragedy from the '*Paragone della Poesia Tragica*,' for the writer of this criticism has converted me to a proselyte instead of being led astray by the example of Corneille, and others." A further expression of dramatic criticism in consideration of Gottsched's "*Cato*" brings the Swiss ideal close to the Italian—"The inner qualities of tragedy should be dictated earnestly and carefully by poetic fire, imagination and the perfect mind (*ingegno*) they are a gift of free nature, and if nature is not provided with them, the poet should not flatter himself that they can be acquired by mechanical means. Again, those inner

plays are the fruit of fine reason which can place the products of the mind (*ingegno*) and imagination according to their types and virtues in a certain measure, relations, and degree, divide them and adapt them to the special intention. This reason can take the place to some degree of natural talent in inventing where it fails, namely, when it can teach how the treasure and the material invented by others can be skilfully employed, their images, conceptions, and beauties be adapted to a methodically narrowed and more pleasing form to excite the feelings." If we supply the Italian equivalent for *Naturell*, *Erfindungskraft*, *Verstand*, *Bilder*, *Begriffe*, *Schonheiten*, and *Gemüte*, namely, *ingegno*, *fantasia*, *ragione*, *immagine*, *concetti*, *bellezze*, and *affetti* we find no difference whatever between Bodmer's thought and Gravina's in the "*Discorso sopra l'Endimione*." The words look different, more modern in German, but they simply repeat what the Italians affirmed at the end of the 17th century. Bodmer's definition of imagination as "a representation of things which fills the mind and makes us believe them real" could be a paraphrase of a sentiment expressed by Pallavicino—"The imagination conceives and represents as true that which the mind, by reasoning and not by representation of imagination, has considered true—by Muratori, Gravina, Conti, Martello." The Muratorian theory that the poet should perfect nature—"The poet must complete, must perfect nature," and "Poets, like painters, to delight with their material, should form in their mind a perfect idea of nature, and use this ideal to guide them in their representation either of grace, beauty, and nobler perfection of things, or of the most terrible, most ridiculous, most striking deformities of the same things according to their degree and quality"—is exactly the same as that of Breitingen—"the poetic painter or poet-painter has also the effect of his paintings in his power, and can dispose them, as he wishes, to produce effect on

the reader. Hence we can say, with reason, that he can not only reach through skilful imitation, the beauty and strength of the original, but surpass them: for the necessity of a good poetical description, and one suited to the aim of the poet is evident since the beauty and art of a painting or an original in nature often escape the coarser minds, and are apparent only to the knowing, the connoisseurs." Again Bodmer's affirmation—"The aim of poetry is nothing more nor less than sensual delight, and only as it requires this as edification is it useful"—where Italian terms are translated direct into German, "sinnliche Ergotzen" being "diletto dei sensi," "Erholung" being "giovamento," "nützlich" being "utile"—can be paralleled in Pallavicino—"Though poetry may not deserve only the name of alluring singer, but also of edifying mistress, nevertheless, if we desire to establish with sincerity its chief power, we would consider it, in my opinion, much more suited to move than to teach." The foundation of the Swiss esthetic, and especially that section devoted to poetry as a continual and broad painting can be found, not merely in Muratori and Gravina, but in Pallavicino. Muratori develops the affirmation "poetry is none other than a painting in words," on the same lines as the Swiss, and it would be possible to set their theories side by side. But such an influence must only have an historical value: it adds nothing to our knowledge of poetry or the poetic impulse.

The dispute with Lessing about the introduction of animals into fable, is reflected in the letter of Calepio to Bodmer, and we see Calepio adopting the view of Lessing, that the fable originally lay in description of human customs, but, disagreeing with him in the importance and efficacy granted to fable in inculcation of moral truth through an historical example. The introduction of animals reveals the intention of the poet too clearly—a moral document rather than a work of art—and the duty

or art of a poet lies in hiding the artifice in favour of direct description, and, therefore, the probable should be as close a reflection of reality as possible in poetry to make this double weakness less apparent. Lessing considers the introduction of animals not as artifice, but as a natural thing in the ancients, but Breitingger and Bodmer must hold it as poetic artifice, as adaptation of the "wonderful," the highest degree in the new—"If the introduction of the fable on the basis of an old tale had as an aim to lessen the appearance of the impossible, the wonderful, also, which has the appearance of the impossible must be present in a high degree in the fable, otherwise it would not require such a mild corrective, and if this appearance of the impossible is only lessened by recourse to an old tale or any other adaptation of nature, the wonderful would not be expelled but only softened down so far as not to be rejected as something really impossible and fictitious." "Wonderful" (*maraviglia*), a stock term in the Settecento, is held by the Swiss to be an integral part of the fable, an inner characteristic, which cannot be expelled by any historical motive: inner probability will explain how this can be possible, but probability must yield to historic truth, since the truth of this probability cannot be established. Lessing relies on this probable and ethical element, contrary to the theory of the wonderful held by Bodmer. Calepio, however, while touching on both problems, discusses both in a sane criticism—"the institution of human habits should have place above all in poetry; since historic subjects are more esteemed in painting than animal, landscape, etc. The Aesopian fables cannot be paralleled with this either in pleasure or in content." Fables thus have no historical value or even justification, and the fable itself acts against all true canons of art, inasmuch as the conception of humanity is not directly expressed, but only some moral precept in the form of allegory, and the poet's intention is evident from the

outset. Compared with epic, fable has no value, and it has no real justification, since satire should take its place. This question of the use of fable enters very little into the criticism of the Settecento, simply on this account that it belonged rather to the ancient satire than that it formed a definitely different literary type.

The letters of Bodmer to Calepio give some light on the knowledge of English literature in Italy, and especially the influence of Milton. Arturo Graf in his "*Anglomania a l'influsso inglese in Italia nel secolo XVIII.*" has developed in great detail this study of English penetration, but it is possible to add details to his work from this correspondence. Graf has stated that Calepio did not know Shakespeare, but from MSS. in the Archivio Calepio concerning the "*Merope*" of Voltaire, we can deduce the fact that Calepio did know Shakespeare either directly or indirectly. "Voltaire considers that as the Englishman, Shakespeare, has introduced into his '*Cæsar*' a crowd of Roman workmen and other members of the populace, and the bleeding body of *Cæsar* was exposed to excite the people to revenge, the French would not follow his example in drama, because '*c'est la coutume, qui est la reine du monde à changer le goût des nations et à trouver en plaisir les objets de notre aversion*,' but it appears that he is mistaken, since he has afterwards imitated him in his '*Cæsar*' and obtained applause." Calepio may quite well have known an Italian edition of Shakespeare's "*Julius Cæsar*." The "*Cato*" of Addison, translated into Italian by Salvini in 1715, provided a favourite theme in the dramatic criticism of Antonio Conti and Calepio, and their condemnation resembles closely that expressed later by Lessing. Martelli in his "*Tragedia antica a moderna*" says—"Our comedy, now concluded, will enjoy the privilege of the Spaniards and also (as Saint-Evremond witnesses) of the English, who will not be confined either to a measure of time or limitation of place." Francesco

Montani quotes in English from Waller's "Poems written on various occasions."

The most important developments in this English influence, however, centre round Milton and, later, Ossian. The latter lies outside the scope of this essay, but the former has considerable importance for us, since the Settescan criticism of Milton resembles greatly that of Dante: the methods of approach, the standards of criticism adopted are the same. The honour of having made Milton known to the Italians must rest with Antonio Conti, but Bodmer, in a letter to Calepio, mentions a work of Santini—"La Redenzione" which may have been influenced by Milton's "Paradise Regained," and also we find Magalotti in a letter to Lord Summers, 16th July, 1709, mentioning the "Paradise Lost," and stating that to translate Milton one would require a mind not less creative, less fervid than that required for the composition of the "Gerusalemme Liberata." After Conti, mention is made by Bodmer of a "Paradiso raquistato" (evidently a translation of "Paradise Regained") by a certain Count Lavini in 1753, but it has been impossible to find any copy of that work. Calepio in his letter concerning the "Messias" of Klopstock compares the epic of the German with Milton's poem without elaborating the comparison; Quadrio mentions him in his "Storia e ragione d'ogni poesia," while Algarotti devotes a few letters to discussion of the "Paradise Lost." Calepio's criticism of Klopstock's "Messias" contains some noteworthy expressions, and is quite modern in view: he accredits to Klopstock a fancy adapted to the subtle inventions, and distinguished by those traits which give vision to expression and pass into that wonderful element distinguishing great from mediocre poets; but the choice of subject leaves no room for free poetical adaptation and invention, and the poem must, even when reproducing faithfully every detail according to historical truth, remain deficient in the representation of

the "noblest and greatest being that can be imagined." With Conti, however, the true critical appreciation of Milton becomes evident, and even Algarotti later shows less penetrative insight into motive and poetical inspiration.

Antonio Conti, like Muratori, belonged to the Royal Society of London, and he was well known in the Settecento as such. In one book, to mention an example, "*Dell' Antichità ed origine di Roma. Dissertazione istorica di Giovanni Stefano Granara. Venezia, 1734.*" the dedication runs "All. A. ed insigne letterato il signor abbate Antonio Conti Patrizio Veneto della Societa Reale di Londra." Conti travelled to London for the first time in 1715, and again in 1717-1718, became acquainted with the leading philosophers of the period, Newton, Clark, Hutcheson, Locke, Berkeley, Leibnitz, was introduced to the Hanoverian court, read the works of Buckingham, Temple, Addison, Pope, Swift, Shakespeare (Cf. *Prose e Poesie* VII., p. 60: "Shakespeare, the Corneille of England, came into his hands; he composed a tragedy on the death of Julius Cæsar, where in the midst of many defects there are many beautiful parts"), translated the "Rape of the Lock" and the "Essay on Man," some poems of Lady Wortley Montagu, and a part of Milton's "Paradise Lost." Among other grandiose literary schemes he conceived the idea of writing a critical history of modern philosophy as professed by the Italians, French, English, and Germans, beginning at the end of the 15th century and finishing at the middle of the 18th. In the letter to Madame la presidente Ferranti, he examines the "Paradise Lost" at considerable length—"You would not be badly placed in the Paradise of Milton where the flowers which come to life beneath the feet of Eve, and the new sun which spreads such beautiful and varied colours on the bed of our first parents, would not give you less pleasure than their mutual caresses. You would be charmed with the first glance which Adam gave to Eve

and to the world; and you would not be less moved by the sadness which overcame him when he learned of his sin and the misery of his descendants. We feel within ourselves that we would have the same feelings if we were in the position of the first man and, as we would wish them happiness and desire innocence, so we are deeply touched by their misfortune and their crime. The description of the fear possessing Adam on re-entering oblivion in his first sleep, the description made to him by the angel of the movements and position of the celestial bodies is filled with the most striking poetic beauties. Milton has introduced a very great variety into his heaven and his hell. Raphael has not the character of Michael, Satan has not the character of Beelzebub; each angel has his own sweetness, his own strength; each demon has his own ferocity, his own pride and despair; each one acts according to his nature, and the different qualities form an admirable contrast.

“The combat of the giants is only a pale reflection of the combat of the angels, and the demons struck down by the word are worth those giants overcome by Jupiter. The Eternal Father of Raphael, who separates with his hands the Sun and Moon, is not as great as the word of Milton on its chariot. I refer to the beautiful description made by Addison in the comparison of English poets.

“Chaos, Sin, Death, although allegorical characters, inspire as gloomy and sad ideas as Charon, the Furies, Cerberus. Satan who holds on his shoulders a shield as great as the moon seen through a telescope, who breaks the doors of Hell, who menaces Chaos and the Sun, appears no less frightful to me than Pluto; the Hell of Dante gives me greater fear than that of Virgil. The Pandemonium of Milton, the castles, palaces, and gardens of Ariosto and Tasso are buildings not less magnificent, not less pleasant than the gardens and the palace of the Sun and of Vulcan.” Conti classifies Milton’s poem among the

great epics, and considers it of as great or greater value than any of classical antiquity, equal to Homer, greater than Virgil, and only to be considered in the same rank as the work of Dante, Ariosto, Tasso. It is a remarkable vindication of that new critical spirit pulsing through the Settecento which makes of criticism a penetrative, individual art, an interpretation of beauty, an effort to understand the "vast and luminous imagination" which can govern and create poetry.

Algarotti, forty years later, strikes the same note in a letter to Agostino Paradisi (1759)—"You should not be afraid to penetrate to the wells of English poetry, and especially Milton, and you will certainly have your mind enriched with noble, great and new ideas. . . . What grandeur in that image of the furrows impressed on the face of Satan by the lightning of God! But it is true that he sleeps sometimes, the English Homer." Then Algarotti mentions Pope's unfavourable criticism, and opines that English beer may have awakened in him strange dreams—"The pillars of the bascilica, or the pandemonicism as he calls it, which increase immeasurably in height to allow the devils to hold consultation are one of those dreams." Milton's poem is to be preferred in subject to the epic of Tasso, but—"if it is necessary for the entire reason of man to know the wherefore of his being, the narration of how that occurred would excite very little his fancy. What pleasure can we have in the mystic significations, the allegories necessary to the argument of 'Paradise Lost,' the various portraits of Abdiel, Uriel, Astaroth, and Nisroch, and other similar characters known only by name to biblical commentators. And the same thing is to be said of their adventures. Does it appear to you that the artillery which thunders in those celestial battles of Milton make the same impression on our imagination as they make on the persons, I shall say, of those spiritual beings"? Conti's criticism has more real insight into the

value and beauty of the "Paradise Lost," while Algarotti shows less sympathy and a more carking spirit. But in both critics the standard is no longer traditional, extrinsic, but intrinsic and modern.

It becomes evident from the study and examination of the early Settecentescan criticism of poetry and drama, and not less from the investigation into pure literary theory that modern criticism, if it does not owe its origin to Italian, is indebted to it for the peculiarly psychological and almost ethical form it took in the work of German critics, like Lessing, for the elaboration and ultimate solution of the problem of tragic effect and tragic purgation, in as far as such a problem could ever adequately be solved (cf. Stephan Odon Haupt: "Wirkt die Tragödie auf das Gemüt oder den Verstand oder die Moraleität der Zuschauer?" Berlin, Simion, 1915), for the separation of the purely creative faculties, imagination, fancy and poetical vision in general from sense-perception, intellect and the logical processes of reason, for the direct appreciation and evaluation of literary works in the past and in the present, for the scientific enunciation of a definite philosophy of poetry as referred to the creative spirit. German criticism appears to be almost evolved from the Italian, if such an evolution could be proved, and the Calopian idea of a Middle-Class Drama already described, finds realization, not only in the work of Lessing, but in the Drama of the *Sturm und Drang*; the somewhat idealistic national tendencies of Muratori and Conti are repeated in the German attack against the French pseudo-classicism and against Voltaire especially, an attack which culminated in both countries in the creation of a great national drama—in Germany, with the work of Goethe and Schiller and in Italy with the work of Alfieri; the effort to create an esthetic in Gravina and Conti, to give a genuine philosophy of history, and the origin of poetry in Vico reaches fuller expression in the *Naïve und sentimentalische Dich-*

ting of Schiller, the work of Herder, and the dramatic and historical criticism of Schlegel; the examination of beauty as an integral part of the poetical impulse in Conti, Muratori and Gravina finds a broader and intenser enunciation and development in Winckelmann, Hamann and Goethe. For perhaps the first time in literary history, and especially in literary theory, philosophy of the mind is seen to be intimately related to philosophy of the creative spirit, and criticism rises into philosophy of art, philosophy of poetry, philosophy of expression: a new ideal is postulated, not an ideal of formal perfection as in the Renaissance, but an ideal of spirit—something that is of the life and of art in a single conception. Although Italian criticism in the 18th century did not and could not fully realize this original and final spiritual identity, it represents the first courageous effort to obtain some such ideal in modern times, and as such is worthy of a more sympathetic and more thorough examination than it has yet received.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

THE following notes are not intended to supply a complete bibliography of 18th century criticism, but rather to act as a guide to further and perhaps deeper investigation into the main ideas and tendencies of that criticism. For the same reason the quotations in the text are not more exactly annotated, sufficient indication having already been given: the thesis does not aim at a minute documentation, but at a general and synthetic account based on the critical literature of the 18th century—a record of ideas rather than a collection of quotations.

THE RENAISSANCE.

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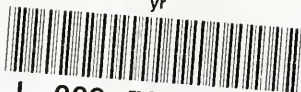


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